



Tapestry Polonaise

No. 29

EARLY ORIENTAL CARPETS

THE ART CLUB OF CHICAGO

CATALOGUE
OF A
LOAN EXHIBITION
OF
EARLY
ORIENTAL CARPETS

FROM
PERSIA · ASIA MINOR
THE CAUCASUS · EGYPT
AND SPAIN



ARTHUR UPHAM POPE



JANUARY · 1926

NK

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January · 1926

PREFATORY NOTE

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This catalogue, addressed primarily to those who have no special knowledge of carpets, may help to reveal something of an important but insufficiently understood art. The complete, though recent emancipation of our ideas as to what constitutes art, has restored early Oriental carpets to the high esteem which they held for centuries in Europe as well as the Orient. Now the greatest examples rank indisputably with man's finest aesthetic achievements. Yet, in their deeper and more subtle phases they are still sufficiently unfamiliar perhaps to justify the interpretations here offered. The attributions are, on the whole, conservative. The new identifications ventured are on the basis of recent personal research for which the full evidence will be published shortly.

The preparation in a few weeks' time of a catalogue dealing with fifty carpets scattered in seven different countries, while deprived of one's own records, photographs and library facilities, is a task the difficulty of which colleagues will appreciate and, it is hoped, judge leniently. It is not possible to guarantee the accuracy of all of the technical details. Adequate light and proper instruments were wanting in several instances for absolutely dependable observation. The material and arrangement of the wefts are often so baffling that more time than was available would have been required to verify the analysis.

Had the catalogue been more worthy it would have been dedicated to Dr. Friedrich Sarre in honor of his Sixtieth Birthday, not only because of the pioneer and fundamental work which he has done in the field of Muhammadan Art upon which every scholar in the field must stand, but also because of the high and generous ideals which have animated all of his work and set a standard for those who come after him.

For thorough editing and many indispensable services the author is under especial obligation to Dr. Phyllis Ackerman. Further gratitude is due Miss Alice Roullier for her loyal assistance through many difficulties. The Exhibition owes a special debt to Mrs. Edith Rockefeller McCormick for the loan of two carpets including the most important piece in the exhibition, to Mr. James F. Ballard for the loan of an exceptional Oushak as well as to the other exhibitors who have cooperated to make the exhibition a success.

The frontispiece color plate was furnished through the kindness of M. & R. Stora and reprinted through the courtesy of the International Studio. Three color plates and two half tones were furnished by B. Altman & Company.

December 25, 1925

A. U. P.

LIST OF EXHIBITORS

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MR. JAMES F. BALLARD

MRS. EDITH ROCKEFELLER MCCORMICK

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B. ALTMAN & COMPANY

New York

E. BEGHIAN

London

BERNHEIMER BROTHERS

Munich

BÖHLER & STEINMEYER

Lucerne

COSTIKYAN & COMPANY

New York

S. KENT COSTIKYAN

New York

DEMOTTE

Paris

DUVEEN BROTHERS

New York

P. W. FRENCH & COMPANY

New York

INDJODJIAN FRERES

Paris

DIKRAN KELEKIAN

New York

VINCENT ROBINSON

London

B. W. STANTON

London

M. & R. STORA

Paris

PARISH WATSON & COMPANY

New York

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We live in an age of new and constantly expanding horizons, artistic as well as scientific. Our cultural world has been transformed as radically as the world of industry. By comparison with our present aesthetic resources the life of the preceding generation seems pathetically meager. They knew nothing of the tranquil, spiritual depths of Chinese painting, the exhilarating beauty of early armor, the tumultuous harmony of Indian sculpture, the virile glory of Gothic tapestries. A list of our recent discoveries in the realm of art from archaic Greek sculpture and early Chinese bronzes to the painting of Cézanne shows how rich have been the rewards of spiritual adventure.

These new discoveries have not been primarily archeological; these precious "finds" were not concealed by physical debris but by the mental debris of dogmatism, complacency and their companions ignorance and intolerance. It was because the older generation accepted formulas in place of direct contacts with the facts that they missed so much. They assumed that art was essentially painting or sculpture, that only a few media and a few approved styles should be taken seriously. But when the new age revolted against all such voluntary impoverishments of life and discovered that much that we had despised and rejected was in essence an infinitely precious heritage, and that art moves in many and devious ways her wonders to perform, a new cultural epoch was inaugurated. But there are yet more aesthetic worlds to conquer and for those uninitiated none more enchanting or rewarding than early Oriental carpets.

It is not that Oriental carpets are unknown in America. The vast traffic in them and the numerous publications about them show that few decorative arts can count so many enthusiastic devotees. But the enthusiasm has not always been wise or tempered by a knowledge of other arts. The rugs that have sometimes been praised as worthy to rank beside paintings could be compared justly only to mediocre paintings. Because of the ubiquity of poor rugs and the exceeding difficulty of seeing really great examples, only a few people have direct personal knowledge of those supreme weavings that are worthy to be placed with any achievements in the realm of art. Fortunately a number of such pieces are now available to the public in New York, Boston, Washington and Detroit and, for the moment, here in Chicago.

Great rugs are their own best advocates. The full theoretical proof that carpets are to be taken seriously as works of art would involve a long treatise on the history of the art as well as one on the nature of art itself. The most elaborate arguments, moreover, might be unconvincing where the simple witness of the carpets themselves would be final, provided always that we saw them as they really were without any of the darkly distorting preconceptions of the inferiority of the so-called minor or merely decorative arts. No verbal exposition of a work of art can ever serve as substitute for a direct and open minded observation of the object itself.

EARLY RUGS AS WORKS
OF ART.

Whoever thus candidly examines any of these finest carpets will find in them the essential qualities which universally mark great works of art. There is the instant appeal to varied senses: velvety or rugged textures delight the sense of touch; pure and glowing colors enchant the eye; and an encyclopaedic variety of patterns that the eye seems actually to feel stimulates within us the sensations of smooth, complex, highly organized and rhythmic movement that radiates a tranquil energy through our whole being. There is, furthermore, in these patterns a direct and vivid appeal to feeling. Although abstract, unaided by literary associations or adventitious sentiment, their expressive power encompasses almost the whole range of the legitimate aesthetic emotions: opulence and majestic power, feminine charm, a vigor sometimes amounting to violence, reserve, elegance and heroic grandeur are all as possible to great carpets as to music or architecture, arts of design with which carpets have more than a superficial affiliation. Finally, in their clarity of conception, in the lucid and inevitably right relations of parts, the early carpets provide the mind and its basal demand for coherence with the profoundest satisfaction.

THE STUDY OF
EARLY RUGS.

OBSERVATION NOT
NAMING THE FIRST
ESSENTIAL.

Surely such works of art are worthy of serious study, for with them as with most arts appreciation waits on understanding. But there are many methods by which rugs may be studied and many ways of understanding them. The first step in rug knowledge is generally assumed to be naming. Whoever has a ready name and a precise period for every rug can acquire a great reputation for wisdom, and novices usually torture their minds, and often in the end kill their enthusiasm, by trying to learn the names of the vastly complicated varieties of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But recognition of types is not in itself knowledge. Appreciation of artistic quality is a much more fundamental and significant kind of knowledge. It is true that naming is an important aid to further study so that research in the field does and should concern itself primarily with problems of identification. But this does not mean that the question of identification is the first or even an essential step to aesthetic comprehension. Many porters and shipping clerks as well as others of higher pretensions can call carpets by name but the carpets themselves remain to them aesthetic blanks. It is sufficient at first to recognize a few clearly distinguished classes and to know the outstanding characteristics of the main periods. Then using this simple classification as a background the carpets can be studied as works of art. Such knowledge is both happier and more useful than any knowledge of names and it is much more easily acquired.

In studying a carpet as a work of art the first thing is to learn how to look at it correctly in order to discover what it really is. Surprising as it may seem, important carpets are rarely examined with the care that they deserve even by professional students. Because the eye can in a moment compass the entire surface of a rug it is readily assumed that it can be seen at a glance. But no worthy piece gives up its meaning so lightly. Its inner beauty is revealed only to a sympathetic and leisurely observation which knows how to read the pattern. The finer examples are often as elaborately composed as a symphony and as sensitively organized as a sonnet. The elements of the design are like notes in a melody or words of a poem: only as they are

individually understood, interpreted and assembled is their meaning made plain. In order to see a rug, therefore, it is necessary to sense the quality of each component part, to feel the manifold relations of the parts to each other and to comprehend them all in a harmonious and significant unity. The great carpets are ready to declare their glory, and a wonderful glory it is, to those and to those only who will make this effort of attention.

The beginning, then, of the understanding of any fine carpet is an analysis of the pattern. In the temporal arts such as music and poetry we are forced to follow the successive steps of the composition in a coherent sequence. In the same way we should follow the component elements in a rug design, naming them one by one. It is essential to learn to recognize the myriad forms of the arabesque, the lotus and the cloudband. No one has ever fully seen a rug, much less appreciated it, until he has thus identified the patterns, the colors and their relationships and assigned definite terms to them all, or, if words be lacking, reproduced them by drawing or in precise memory images. For this essential work the brief analytical notes in the catalogue may help. They are dull enough taken by themselves but they are planned to assist in the examination of the rugs by steadying the eye, so easily confused by novelty and complication, and forcing it beyond the vagueness of the general impression to the specific content that underlies and creates that impression.

ANALYSIS OF PATTERN
ESSENTIAL TO ACCURATE
OBSERVATION.

Such a painstaking analysis not only sharpens the observation so that it discovers unexpected delights, but also, and this is perhaps even more important, it corrects the general tendency to an exaggerated emphasis on some one element in the complicated ensemble. The enthusiasm of rug devotees is often caught by some one striking aspect to the neglect of others equally important so that they quite misunderstand the carpet, ignore its finest qualities or are oblivious to serious defects. Color is so stimulating and satisfying, textures or the drawing of details can be so fascinating that we are all tempted to dally with these minor and partial enchantments and postpone or abandon the search for other values and the severer intellectual task of reading the design in its complete integrity. The responsive thrill to the dominant colors of a carpet is a step toward full appreciation but it is one step only. Genuine beauty does indeed flatter the lust of the eye but it also appeals to the whole mind and to its basal demand for coherence.

A thorough analysis and integration of a fine carpet design, the full reading of the score as it were, is neither a quick nor an easy task, but whoever is willing to undertake this discipline before even one important carpet and take the trouble to expand by personal observation the necessarily fragmentary notes of the catalogue will find revealed a range of invention, a depth and a creative force and a quality of beauty that a thousand superficial glances would not have suggested.

But even the accurate and detailed observation of a given carpet does not exhaust its possibilities. Each carpet had a use and was associated in an intimate and important way with the life of the people who wove it. What it meant to them is interesting and significant. Each pattern has its history, every style its reason. To unravel all of these problems is an endlessly fascinating task and a difficult one for it calls

IMPORTANCE OF BACK-
GROUND KNOWLEDGE.

for a knowledge of the history, geography, ethnology, social customs and economic institutions of the rug producing countries that few can hope to acquire. But even a little background knowledge clarifies and enriches our observation and legitimately intensifies our appreciations.

RUG WEAVING AS A
BRANCH OF MUHAM-
MADAN ART.

Oriental rug weaving is a branch of Muhammadan art, one aspect of a very rich and vital culture. This culture has held sway at one time or another from China to Spain, from Vienna and the Caspian Sea to Abyssinia and India with outposts in Malaysia. Despite, however, this vast geographical and ethnical range it has maintained throughout an integral character that shows that it has been the expression of a common and vital force. It was this culture that produced the Alhambra and the Taj Mahal, the Arabian Nights and Omar Khayyam, which provided an essential element in Gothic art and was an important initiating factor in the Renaissance,⁽¹⁾ and still exercises a stimulating and moulding force on much current taste and practise.

Rug weaving is only one of many crafts that were practised and practised well by Muhammadan peoples. For centuries they continued to produce masterpieces in glass, ivory, metals, faience and textiles to say nothing of architecture, calligraphy and manuscript ornamentation. Carpet making was probably the oldest of their arts excepting pottery and was perhaps closest to the life of the people, but it was only one expression of their aesthetic energy and in its highest achievements, especially in Persia, it stood in intimate dependence upon the other arts, celebrating themes common to them all, a fact the neglect of which has caused many errors. It even borrowed freely from them. The architectural decorator, the faience maker, the brocade weaver, the calligraphist, the relieur and above all the illuminator and miniaturist all contributed to rug designs. All of the triumphs in carpet weaving have thus been the work of co-operative endeavor on the basis of a common ideal.

As a branch of this Muhammadan culture, carpet weaving participates in a rich and ancient heritage of art forms gathered from almost the whole of Asia and from the Eastern Mediterranean as well. It is, indeed, primarily the fusing of these varied materials that gave to Muhammadan art its richness. Carpet weaving shares the genius of this Muhammadan culture for abstract forms that are at the same time expressive, its passion for perfect craftsmanship, its love of clarity, grace and elegance, its predominantly decorative rather than realistic character and its capacity to transform humble and common substances into precious works of art. It is this vast body of Muhammadan culture and the general conditions out of which it arose that are the sustaining forces in the art of carpet weaving and the principle reason for its greatest achievements. It is to this background that we must refer most unsolved carpet problems.

THE PRIMARY DISTINC-
TION OF HIGH AND LOW
SCHOOL CARPETS.

The distinction between high and low school carpets, to appropriate Mumford's useful designation, between, that is, the court carpets and the carpets of the common people is an essential preliminary to the understanding of the art, for each of these two basic classes must be judged by its own intentions and standards. The court carpets were woven to the order of monarchs and nobles who often supplied the

(¹) Cf. e.g. Gustave Soulier, *Les Influences Orientales dans la Peinture Toscane*, Paris, 1924.

In comparing this color plate with the half-tone plate of the Von Tucher carpet, the two pieces may seem dissimilar but they are actually so close that Jacoby considers them as probably from the same workshop and as designed by the same master. A detailed comparison goes a long way to substantiate this theory, although the two carpets are not as close as the Mackay piece and the piece in the Schloss Museum which constitute a true pair.



Vase Carpet

No. 18

materials, met the high costs of production and to a large extent controlled the designs. They employed for the designing artists attached to the court who well understood their lords' tastes and brought to the work highly sophisticated professional skill. They were familiar, moreover, with the styles current at rival courts so that these high school carpets are somewhat international, so international that one may for a moment be puzzled to distinguish between a carpet woven in Constantinople for the Sultan, Tabriz for the Shah or Lahore for the Emperor of India. It is these court weavings that touch the highest summit of the art. At their best they exhibit not only a superlative technical mastery but also an exhilarating quality of sheer loveliness combined with a deep and moving power that rank them among man's highest aesthetic achievements.

The rugs of the common folk, on the other hand, the low school rugs, were woven for personal use by both townspeople and nomads. Sometimes, especially in later years, the patterns are dim derivatives from the royal weavings but more often, particularly with the nomads, they are plain and forthright, consisting of simple floral and geometrical motives in a few colors. Though low school patterns pass from one region to another, this interchange never obliterates the decided local character of the designs. Low school rugs smack of the soil. They have their roots in the open country, far back among the wandering tribes of central Asia whence the craft of knotted weaving probably came. These rugs do not vie with court productions any more than the black tent of the nomad or the adobe house of the townsman vie with the palace of a Shah or a Sultan, but they are beautiful nevertheless. Indeed they have a tang and an individuality that we sometimes miss in the more elaborate and self conscious weavings of the court. The best of them show a naive and primitive directness until well into the nineteenth century. The artistic merit of the fine examples has not been sufficiently recognized or exploited.

Though the two classes of high and low school rugs are thus sharply divided, underlying this division is a common character that is the expression of the part all carpets played in the life of the peoples that produced them. In the decoration of every interior in these lands the carpet was and is the central feature. Indeed the carpet occupies in the Persian home almost the same place that the tokonoma does in the Japanese. Thomas Herbert who travelled in the Near East in the seventeenth century wrote: "In their houses they have little furniture or household stuff except it be their carpets and some copper works They eat on the ground, sitting on carpets cross legged as doe tailers. There is no man so simple but he sitteth on a carpet better or worse, and the whole house or roome wherein he sitteth is wholly covered with carpets."⁽²⁾ Shah and shepherd alike regarded the carpet as his most precious possession.

Almost every function of life was ornamented and dignified by carpets. They served for welcoming the guest, for the ceremonies of marriage or death, for prayer, for penance, as gift to monarch, mosque or foreign ambassador, as war indemnity or war booty and for the celebration of great public occasions. When in 1923 in com-

PLACE OF THE CARPET
IN THE LIFE OF
ORIENTAL PEOPLES.

⁽²⁾ Thomas Herbert, *Relation of Some Yeares Travaille etc.* London, 1634.

memoration of the Queen's jubilee all Amsterdam was bedecked with rugs it was but an echo of Venetian fetes especially well depicted by Carpaccio and these in turn were echoes of the greater Oriental festivities marking notable occasions made gorgeous by a lavish display of carpets. Only last month at the accession of Reza Khan to the throne of Persia, marking a renaissance in the life of the country, the whole of the capital city, it is said, took on the appearance of a great carpet bazaar.

THE MAIN TYPES
PERSIAN.

Beautiful carpets have been woven in China, Central Asia, India, the Caucasus, Egypt and Spain, but by the common consent of all qualified observers Persian carpets outrank all others. In fact Persian genius was responsible for much of the glory of all Muhammadan art and the art of rug weaving of the high school type was essentially a creation of Persian weavers, painters and designers. The carpets of the Turkish and Indian courts were directly derived from Persian models, Persian weavers introducing the art to the Turks as prisoners of war and to the Indians as highly paid and honored masters.

Persian carpet designs at their best are marked by intellectual qualities that no other carpets ever approach. Although they are often very complicated and of a subtlety that taxes our understanding, nevertheless they are rational and well organized. A definite and reasonable scheme always dominates the symphonic wealth and splendor of the greatest of them. Most impressive is the ability of the Persian designers to arrange a series of orders of decoration. Each order in these complex compositions has its individual quality. Each moves in a different dimension with a different rhythm and at a different rate of speed. Each has quite different values and functions. Each can be taken by itself and so taken is complete and beautiful. In combining, moreover, they alternately collide or blend and remain aloof. Yet despite this independence of the elements and this intricacy of their relations they are held well in hand and made to march decorously together "confederate to one golden end, Beauty." The fine taste and clear headedness that the Persians show in keeping each order of design thus cleanly separate and true to its own character throughout, the control with which they deal with the new qualities that, not explicit in the designs separately, are created by their interrelations and the way in which all factors are coordinated and all tensions resolved would be notable in any form of thinking or artistic creation. These schemes of significant relations are entitled to rank with musical thought and feeling and even in some measure with mathematical insight.

Equally remarkable with this rational control is the skill with which the scheme for the control is kept from being too obtrusive. The severity of the logic is always gracefully veiled. The authority of the scheme, moreover, rests lightly on the minor parts permitting them a delightful freedom. Some details have the effect of being even carelessly placed though actually in a fine carpet no smallest feature is unplanned.

The general composition of these carpets usually follows that of the book covers or of the beautiful mosque doors. The material of the designs is largely naturalistic without being realistic. Many of the blossoms and trees that appear in carpets can be identified, others are the long creation of centuries of refinement and imagination working on ancient themes like the lotus and its decorative derivatives, the arabesque.

and its myriad lovely forms or the difficult Chinese cloud bands. In the treatment of animals and personages the early carpets are vivid and masterful, but always in sixteenth century work the instinct of the true decorator, rarely misled by technical virtuosity, kept the illustrative elements within bounds.

While the colors of the best Persian carpets are indeed lovely and while a few of them touch an intense and exhilarating fortissimo chord, for the most part in the great period they are not dashing or bold. Sobriety and reserve, marks of aristocracy which they inherited from the noble Sassanian brocades and which are traditional virtues among the Persians even today, were the ideals rather than the intensity and excitement that mark nomadic rugs and the carpets of some neighboring peoples. Later, as luxury and self consciousness increased and intellectual energy declined, the colors were multiplied and somewhat intensified.

In combining colors the Persians were supreme. Any of their creations from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century exhibits an ingenuity of color invention and a sympathy of understanding that cannot even be indicated in a general discussion.⁽³⁾ No one who studies these carpets with an interest in color harmonies can refrain from astonishment and admiration.

Turkish carpets, although inspired by Persian models are on the whole of a different order. There is a simplicity and straightforwardness in the Turkish character and a love of quiet luxury that soon expressed themselves in carpet designs. The Turk is no thinker, and the intricate organization, the high nervous intensity and the poetic suggestiveness of Persian designs are usually beyond his taste. He prefers richness and repose and, therefore, chooses comparatively simple designs that are serene, though they often express a certain grandeur and quiet force. To this there are two exceptions: the Broussa carpets which surpass even the Persian in delicacy and refinement, though even they are quite simple in scheme; and a few of the early Oushaks done under Persian guidance, which are marvels of intricate patterning.

TURKISH.

Instead of the twelve or fourteen tones of sixteenth century Persian carpets or the twenty or more of the so-called Polonaise carpets of the seventeenth century, we find the Turkish designers often content with three or four. But though the colors are few, they are extraordinarily rich and deep. The intense ruby panels of some of the early Oushaks or the gold and crimson of some of the later pieces can scarcely be matched in the whole history of textile ornamentation.

The motives also, saving those of the Broussa carpets, are broad and relatively simple. Great star forms, heavily conventionalized flower figures, rather stately, high formalized arabesques and somewhat clumsy cloud bands replace the swift, lively movements, the sweeping spirals and fluttering ribands of the Persian carpets. The technique is correspondingly broad also. With the exception of a few very elegant Broussa carpets and a few of the prayer rugs of the eighteenth century which sometimes attained an almost meaningless finesse, the mark of a slackening power, Turkish weaving is coarser and the pile thicker than in Persian work.

(3) Karl Hopf of Stuttgart will soon bring out a volume on carpets containing some very careful studies of color schemes and the various devices for color blending and compensation.

CAUCASUS.

The Caucasus has been shockingly neglected in carpet literature. There are famous treatises on carpets that do not even mention this important region. While the carpets of Persia and Turkey were becoming internationalized through the co-operation of highly sophisticated artists, the provincial courts of the Caucasus held true to their original sources of inspiration and developed a style of severity and monumental grandeur. Especially in the region of Shemaka, Baku and Kuba, the weavers produced a group of carpets that attained a heroic force that marks them quite apart in the history of the art. The designs of this type combine floral and animal features from the Persian court carpets with dragons and other devices of Chinese origin. These are assimilated to the basic nomadic patterns, the integrity of the local style being decisively maintained. The real significance of these carpets was long concealed by the fantastic attribution of them to Armenia. Actually, they are the true offspring of the grandeur of the Caucasus mountains and the virility of the culture there developed. The best of these carpets are very rich and beautiful.

The drawing of Caucasus carpets is marked by firm and hard contours, rigid angularity, jagged serrations and flatness and breadth. In some of the later pieces a jewel-like elegance suggesting lapidarian work is reached, but while this is very charming, it is generally achieved at the expense of the impressiveness of the design. Whoever has any feeling for the primitive quality in art, for a flavor of the heroic age, must find the greater Caucasus weavings of stirring beauty.

The colors of Caucasus carpets are less deep and rich than those of the Turkish pieces, and they lack the sobriety and subtlety of the Persian work. But they have a directness, a force of contrast and a truly individual character that well suit the patterns.

CLASSIFICATION OF
CARPETS BY PERIOD.

Quite as important as this classification by national or racial types is, the classification by periods. A sufficient number of dated pieces exists to give us a clue to the characteristics of the successive epochs, and further confirmation comes from related faience and manuscripts that are also dated. Using these as a guide the patterns themselves provide the clue to age. For designs are not inert elements like bricks in a building. Even such an apparently standardized art as calligraphy is in constant flux. There are minute changes in the forms of letters, clear only to the acute eye, but sufficiently clear to a genius like Dr. Flury of Basle to enable him, with the help of countless patient measurements, to date writing from the seventh to the fourteenth century to within twenty-five years. Similarly in rug patterns, arabesques, cloud bands, spiral tendrils, the structure of a lotus, the width of a guard stripe, the placing of a medallion, the serrations of a palmette and the way in which the motives are combined are all indications of the period. Each feature of the pattern has a definite life history. Each changes from generation to generation, often within a single decade. One never knows any given pattern until he can trace its full story.

These changes reflect faithfully the changing social and national life. The art is stimulated by a favorable environment, by wealth, leisure, national pride, the contagious energy and air of easy achievement that marks all great cultural periods, and it is just as quickly corrupted and debased by disorganization, poverty, discontent

or the substitution of commercial for artistic ideals. These responses to economic and social environment are not haphazard. They follow laws which in varying degrees control the evolution of design everywhere and which are based in turn upon psychological laws. These laws, operating within the art itself, are at work even when the environmental forces are stationary or indifferent. The difficult work of proving and classifying these changes is proceeding slowly, for it calls for thousands of detailed drawings. When it is reasonably complete we shall have not only material for the closer dating of carpets, but some revealing generalizations applicable to the whole psychology of art creation.

The principal stages in the evolution of the art of rug weaving are generally designated by centuries or portions of them. But the sophomoric idea that a bell is rung and a page turned every hundred years is not in good favor with historians. The reigns of important monarchs constitute a sounder division, for when a monarch had sufficient power and taste to impose his own character on contemporary art something like an epoch was created. In a brief discussion, however, the classification by centuries is more convenient.

A few fifteenth century carpets still survive, large ones from Spain, smaller ones from Asia Minor and a few precious fragments from Persia. A good case can be made for placing some of the Northwest Persian Medallion carpets such as Numbers 1 and 2 at the end of the fifteenth century but this dating has yet to be proved. All of the fifteenth century carpets are marked by great strength and simplicity and where they are at all intricate as in the border of the piece in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs⁽⁴⁾ or in the field of the Parish Watson piece the patterns are as firm as if of pierced metal. Another marked characteristic is the noble spacing of the principle designs and the simplicity of the color schemes.

XV CENTURY.

With the reviving naturalism of Persian art, which owed a great deal to Bizhad and his followers, the court carpets began to take on a more florid and realistic style so that by the first quarter of the sixteenth century Persian carpets have almost the freedom and resource of painting. Despite, however, the tumultuous flow of motion that energizes the new style the earlier sixteenth century carpets still maintain a certain reserve and tranquillity which is essentially due to the fine spacing, the coordination of design and the accurate rendering of the least detail. The Turkish and Caucasus carpets of the sixteenth century, while lacking the variety of the Persian carpets, share with them the same qualities of firmness and dignity. All of these sixteenth century carpets have an air of adequacy and assurance that is the mark of a young and vital art nearing its crest. The specific marks of sixteenth as against seventeenth century weaving are best discussed in descriptions of individual rugs.

XVI CENTURY.

As wealth and luxury developed in all of the rug weaving countries, as courts became more ambitious and self-conscious and love of display began to displace the humble passion for perfection, nearly all of the great qualities of sixteenth century weaving became corrupted. In most of the seventeenth century carpets repetition and

⁽⁴⁾ This superb piece will be published soon in a catalogue of the Muhammadan Art in the Museum. An equally important piece in the possession of Dr. Sarre will appear in the second volume of the Vienna Carpet Book (Cf. Bibliography).

habit have taken the place of invention and hard thinking, carelessness and guess work of scrupulous exactness and careful measurements; the finely coordinated designs have become merged and confused; the patterns have grown thick, the original character being quite forgotten; the foregrounds and backgrounds have been mixed; the materials have been cheapened and the weaving has become coarse and loose. All of this is especially true of carpets destined for the European market. Indeed the European demand was one of the prime factors in the deterioration of the art.

But while Turkish and Caucasus carpets continued to decline in the seventeenth century, the best work in Persia made for the local courts and nobles continued to maintain to some degree the old standards. In technique and materials some of the later carpets leave nothing to be desired. Borrowing more and more from the brocade weaver and the painter they achieved naturalistic effects of great charm. Some of the work of the second half of the seventeenth century such as the rugs woven for the Mausoleum of Shah Abbas II at Kum is of extraordinary and dazzling loveliness.⁽⁵⁾ None the less the nobility and grandeur of the earlier compositions are wanting.

XVIII CENTURY.

By the eighteenth century most of the original motives had been lost or stereotyped. The rapid and elegant movements, the intricately flowing lines are now arrested. The new forms are not without beauty but it is a beauty of a lesser order. Some of the Herat, Joshagan, Kerman and Shiraz rugs of the eighteenth century have considerable merit. Many of them are beautiful in tone, firm and clear in drawing, of delightful texture and of real if not inspired decorative charm. But excellent as some of them are, they have declined a long way from the former estate, and only by a generous sympathy can they be seen as important works of art.

WRONG ASSUMPTIONS
THAT CONCEAL TRUE
CHARACTER OF EARLY
RUGS.

In order really to appreciate carpets it is essential to avoid a number of assumptions, unfortunately common, which, born in ignorance and nourished in sentimentality, make it difficult to see the carpets as they truly are. Some of these fallacies are aesthetic, others intellectual. Among the former the worst offender, and the one which does most to hinder the full enjoyment of the best carpets, is the idea that the sure mark of precious merit in an antique textile is dull, weak and confused colors and general shabbiness. It cannot be too often or too emphatically affirmed that all great art is marked by a spirit of unquenchable youth and that purity and freshness, clarity and depth of color are far more admirable and truly delightful than the vague and musty tones which are generally the product of poor dyes and long accumulated dirt. Much ordinary soot and grease has been affectionately coddled under the name of "patina," and "atmosphere" is quite often nothing but an obnoxious accumulation which hides the original glories of the carpet. It is the purity and strength of the colors that are the source of permanent charm, the fluctuating glow that comes from numerous slight tonal changes, the lustre that comes from the combination of fine dyes and fine materials and above all the balance, harmony and distribution of colors which is the work of genius, patience and a passion for perfection.

Another fallacy of a different kind, but equally poisonous, is that the most interesting and important thing about a carpet is the symbolic meaning of the patterns.

⁽⁵⁾ See the Art Bulletin for April, 1926, for color plates of some of these pieces.

A rug is, on this theory, essentially a document written in strange character from which the initiated can read off the life history of the weaver, the fortunes of his tribe, their beliefs and customs. All such necromancy is to be classed with the "Language of Flowers" and the "Meaning of Jewels." It belongs to the age of secret fraternities and all the nonsense that sprang up in America in the 1840's as our echo of continental philosophic and literary romanticism. If we are going to treat a carpet as a sort of glorified cross word puzzle, in the same class with passwords, grips and talismans, its beauty will never be disclosed. It will not abide such an indignity. Such a point of view is not only contrary to the facts but offends the spirit of art and is the confession of an essential philistinism. The creation of beauty of a high order is an intrinsic value, self justifying. At least, so thought the weavers of the great carpets; for they used every kind of device that came to hand whatever its original source or meaning provided only that it be beautiful or capable of an interesting treatment. So eager were these designers for material they did not hesitate to borrow from the idolatrous and unclean generations with whom they came in contact: cloud bands and other tchi forms from China; geometrical patterns from Turkish nomads; rinceau from Greece; animal forms from Siberia, Byzantium and Egypt; Assyrian sun disks and Hebrew stars as well as Buddhist niches from India. From every available country, race and religion they took patterns "whose simple destiny was but to be beautiful." They assembled them as notes in a song, not as hieroglyphics in a code.

Originally, no doubt, many of these patterns had specific meanings as they do even today among the Chinese weavers. Symbolism appears early in the history of man, and at the dawn of civilization plays an important rôle though, later, it becomes the occupation of vacant minds or often a self protective device of priestly classes. But the original meanings of rug patterns have for the most part been quite lost, especially to the weavers themselves. The history of patterns which now attracts scholars is the story of their evolution and their relations to other patterns. Such knowledge adds legitimately to their interest and charm, it informs us of their original aesthetic intention, reveals their inward character and gives us standards for judging them. What truth and value there is in the theory of symbolism will ultimately be made clear by professional studies. Amateurish speculations are apt to distort and conceal the real nature of rug designing.

One further precaution is necessary if we are really to understand fine carpets. We must be clear about our point of view for what we see in them depends upon what we want and expect them to be. They may be regarded as primarily works of art, but usually, they have an attractive utility value also. It is possible but dangerous to serve two masters in such matters. Appraisals are often further complicated, moreover, by considerations of historical interest, rarity and price. All of these points of view are legitimate, they can be coordinated and each given its proper due, but they do not adjust themselves automatically and if left ambiguous and shifting, destroy sound judgment.

It is partly the failure to think this problem through that has so often frustrated collectors.⁽⁶⁾ For although there have been many collectors in America and although

CONFUSIONS RESULTING
FROM VARIOUS POINTS
OF VIEW.

THE PROBLEM AND
OPPORTUNITY OF THE
COLLECTOR.

⁽⁶⁾ These problems were dealt with in a series of articles: Value in Oriental Rugs by Arthur Upham Pope, in *Arts and Decoration*, June, August, October, 1922.

more fine pieces are owned privately here than abroad, the ideal collection has not yet been made either here or there. Yerkes succeeded probably better than anyone else. The quality of his collection has not been equalled in modern times, but even in this remarkable collection standards were not maintained consistently, and there were serious lacunae. Despite other notable achievements by Williams, McIlhenny, Ballard and Myers for which all must be grateful, no one has yet brought to carpet collecting the extraordinary combination of qualities that has distinguished the work of Mr. Eumorfopoulos in the field of Chinese art: wide and accurate knowledge, bold and impeccable taste, a consistent and unflinching insistence on the priority of the highest quality of beauty, the sense for system and the will to labor and sacrifice. Yet such a collector is especially needed in this field. Irreplaceable carpets are constantly being destroyed through unthinking use. There is no further source of supply. There are none in private possession in the Orient, practically all the mosques save Kerbela and Kum were long ago robbed of their treasures, and those that are left will stay. No archaeological work can possibly uncover important carpets. Deterred by cost or indifferent through ignorance our Museums, saving for four or five notable exceptions, are doing nothing toward the acquisition of carpets. It is already too late to secure a full record of this, the most important of all textile arts, an art full of instruction and inspiration for students and artists, an art eloquently revealing a rich and powerful culture, an art full of infinite possibilities of delight. But private collectors, working individually or with Museums, still have here a brief opportunity that is perhaps not quite equalled in any other field of art.

THE PROBLEM OF
PRECISE
IDENTIFICATION.

It is only after one has studied early carpets as works of art and in relation to the various phases of their background that the arduous and still unsettled problems of exact identification can be profitably undertaken. The scholar wants to know just when and where a carpet was woven; if possible, for whom and under what circumstances. If it is obviously the work of a special designer he wants to know who he was or, at least, to what school he belonged. But the difficulties are formidable and discouraging. The history of early carpets has not yet been written and perhaps cannot be for years. The absence or inaccessibility of contemporary records is a serious handicap. We still have to be content in most cases to indicate the general region from which an early rug comes, and it is only recently that we have been able to say confidently within thirty or forty years of the date of the weaving, and that not always. Of only two kinds of early Persian carpets can we say with anything approaching surety just where they were woven. The so-called Vase carpets, the true Shah Abbas palace carpets, were woven in Joshaghan Ghali and its immediate environs, located about seventy-three miles northeast of Isfahan, and perhaps, the so-called Polonaise carpets also were woven there.⁽⁷⁾ The so-called "Ispahan" carpets, usually with great palmettes and scrolling vines on a wine red ground, were woven in Herat

(7) The evidence for this attribution will be published in detail in the forthcoming monograph on the Vase carpet belonging to Mrs. Edith Rockefeller McCormick (No. 16). A discussion of the so-called Polonaise carpets will be given in an article on the Carpets in the Mausoleum of Shah Abbas II at Kum which will appear in the *Art Bulletin*, N. Y. A preliminary announcement of some of this evidence was given in the *Kunstchronik* for July, 1925.

as Dr. Martin has indicated.⁽⁸⁾ Probably the very fine red silk carpets such as those in the Altman Collection and the piece lent by Mr. Edsel Ford to the Detroit Institute of Art were woven at Kashan, while the region of Karabagh produced some of the early Medallion carpets such as Numbers 1 and 2 and Tabriz, perhaps, some of the animal carpets such as Number 3. The Dragon carpets, through a preposterous comedy of errors long known as Armenian⁽⁹⁾ are from the region of the Eastern Caucasus. The only early Turkish carpets satisfactorily identified come from Broussa, Oushak and Bergamo, although we know from contemporary documents that carpets were woven also at Konia, Sivas and the region of Smyrna among other places. Thanks to Dr. Sarre's able researches⁽¹⁰⁾ we now know that the so-called Damascus carpets of geometrical design were woven in Cairo. Of the various Spanish carpets none have yet been recognized except the yellow and blue rugs that come from Alcaraz.

The names of three great designers or master weavers are now known to us: Ghiyas ed-Din Djami (1521) who was responsible for the great medallion animal carpet that belonged to Queen Margharita;⁽¹¹⁾ Maksoud of Kashan (1539) who did the Ardebil Mosque carpet (No. 6) and Ne'amat'ullah of Joshagan (1762) who did the carpets in the Mosque of Kum. The pair of tree and animal carpets, one of which belongs to the Kaiser Friederich Museum and the other of which is in the collection of Mr. Clarence Mackay, and the pair of animal carpets, one of which is in the Metropolitan Museum and the other in the collection of Dr. Sarre, are in the style of Sultan Muhammad, one of the greatest of miniature painters.⁽¹²⁾

These identifications of ten or a dozen types and of three individual masters is the meagre result of thirty years of scholarship. The provenance of about fifty other types remains in the realm of conjecture. It is true that we have evidence for some further attributions but they are still too fragmentary and controversial to be of interest in a general catalogue.

For the identification of rugs the pattern is often a quite uncertain guide. There was too much borrowing and trading about of designs, too much special pattern drawing by court artists, for the general appearance of a carpet to reveal much more than the country and period in which it was made, always excepting a few highly individual types like the Herats, Kashans and Vase carpets. In difficult and ambiguous cases the minor details of the weaving technique may be important evidence. It is not yet clear how far these technical details can help us, but the completion of analyses of all the early carpets on which several scholars are at work will at least assist in the final classification and attributions. Brief notes on the weaving of each piece have therefore been included in this catalogue for the sake of record, for the use of scholars working

⁽⁸⁾ F. R. Martin, *A History of Oriental Carpets Before 1800*, p. 69.

⁽⁹⁾ Arthur Upham Pope, *The Myth of the Armenian Dragon Carpets*, in *Jahrbuch der Asiatischer Kunst*, 1925 and Heinrich Jacoby, *Eine Sammlung Orientalischer Teppiche*, Berlin, 1923 s. 84 et seq.

⁽¹⁰⁾ F. Sarre, *Die ägyptische herkunft der sogennante Damaskus-teppiche*, *Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst*, April, 1926, and also *Die ägyptischen teppiche*, *Jahrbuch der Asiatische Kunst*, 1924, s. 19. A summary of Dr. Sarre's argument together with some new evidence will be published by the writer in the *International Studio* for April, 1926, and a more technical article in *Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst* a little later.

⁽¹¹⁾ Cf. *A Dated Animal Carpet in the Poldi Pezzoli Museum* by the writer in *Dedalo* for April, 1926.

⁽¹²⁾ Dr. E. Kuehnelt of the Kaiser Friederich Museum independently came to this same conclusion.

on this problem and also to help establish the principle that no important carpets should be published without this information.⁽¹³⁾

Rug weaving is often spoken of as if it were a hopelessly lost art and any thoughtful comparison of the best modern work with that of the early periods would seem to warrant a pessimistic view. But revival is not impossible and something like the old standards are attainable if American taste and purchasing power will support efforts now being made in Persia. Of skill in the actual weaving there is abundance fully equal to that of the sixteenth century. The new dyes are varied and beautiful even if not as lustrous and as "kind" to the wool as the older dyes and some of the secrets of the latter are fortunately being slowly rediscovered. The finest materials are still available for a price and a little waiting. There remains the problem of design which might at first be met by the cooperation of European trained artists thoroughly grounded in all the characteristic arts of the Near East. Starting with a close dependence on the old models, with a little sympathetic guidance and practical support, the weavers of Persia could perhaps in time produce rugs worthy of the old Shahs. No better evidence of such possibilities could be asked for than the example of modern weaving, Number 55. Although the conjunction of all the necessary favoring conditions is difficult, perhaps improbable, the result is worth working for.

Nor if weaving can be really revived will it be necessary to wait centuries for the rugs to become beautiful. Mere age as a factor in creating the beauty of carpets has been absurdly exaggerated. A detailed analysis of the color changes in many sixteenth century carpets shows that in the best of them modification has been exceedingly slight. Many colors have not perceptibly changed at all. The beauty of old carpets is no accident of time and exposure. It is rather the deliberate creation of hard working, thoughtful, gifted men who knew what they were doing. Carpets have lost more through age than they have ever gained, shocking as this may be to our incorrigible sentimentalists who prefer to explain away important human achievements as accidents of nature. Since human capacity is the essential factor in the beauty of rugs it is not impossible that it can be recaptured. In a few years we shall know whether or not this hope rests upon the solid substance of fact.

⁽¹³⁾ For a clear and adequate account of the technique of weaving, see (Tattersall) Notes on Carpet Knotting and Weaving, Victoria and Albert Museum. Useful information will also be found in W. A. Hawley, *Oriental Rugs*, p. 45 et seq.

I

PERSIAN CARPETS

CARPETS FROM NORTHWEST PERSIA

THERE is a small group of a dozen or fifteen rather austere planned but very beautiful Medallion carpets, which by common consent have been ascribed to Northwest Persia. The best of them are believed to have been woven at the very beginning of the sixteenth century. Their freedom from Chinese influence, which was early dominant at the Court of Shah Ismail (1499-1524), and the Byzantine quality of the arabesques, as well as a certain archaic grandeur and simplicity, have all been thought to indicate an early dating. It is conceivable, however, that these characteristics may be due to a lagging provincialism of some looms not in close communication with the court, although these carpets are sophisticated enough to have been woven for important patrons. Some, like the Buquoy piece⁽¹⁴⁾ and the magnificent one in the Royal Palace at Stockholm,⁽¹⁵⁾ are enriched with animal and hunting scenes of such technically perfect drawing that they must have been designed by court painters. Affiliations with modern types, seem to point at least, to Karabagh or Shusha as the probable origin of most of these pieces, although the more elegant and pictorial may have been woven at Tabriz or some nearby town. Three important pieces of this type are in the Metropolitan Museum, two of a very interesting color in the Ballard collection, and one very finely planned in the Altman collection. One with a beautiful turquoise tone is owned by Mrs. W. H. Crocker of San Francisco. The few remaining pieces are in foreign museums and private collections.

NORTHWEST PERSIA, END XV OR OPENING XVI CENTURY MEDALLION CARPET

I

The intricate field is dominated by a triple concentric medallion; the innermost is saffron with radial stems and blossoms in red and green, the intermediate is crimson with a circlet of lotus blossoms in buff and celadon green, the outer is moss green with a similar circlet of larger lotus flowers. The corners, in saffron and celadon, are of similar but not identical design. The field of deep crimson is covered with a staccato network of firm, angular stems and blossoms in ivory and blue, over which is laid in wide spirals half arabesques of exquisite early design, some in saffron, some in green. The bar of the medallion is in saffron and red; the pendant escutcheon in turquoise with lotus and peony blossoms in saffron, white and crimson.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Cf. Meisterwerke Muhammadanische Kunst, Tafel 46.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Cf. Martin, op. cit., Plates IV and V.



Medallion Carpet

No. 1

PLATE I

The border shows a scarlet ground almost wholly covered by wide-banded arabesques, each ornamented by a lotus and a pair of confronted birds. The arabesques enclose rigid palmettes in green and saffron, with short ribbon-like bands in turquoise and saffron connecting the bases and passing behind the tips. The saffron guard stripes carry simple undulating vines and blossoms in red and blue.

Pile, wool; warp, white cotton; weft, linen, 3 after each row of knots. Red end selvage. Knot, Turkish, 15 vertical, 13 horizontal, 195 to the square inch.

L. 15 ft. 7½ in.
w. 7 ft. 2 in.
Lent by
Parish Watson.

This carpet, perhaps the earliest whole Persian carpet yet found, belongs to the small but famous group of Northwest Persia medallion carpets, but its dominant color scheme of gold, green and crimson is unique, and the intricate decoration of the main field is also unprecedented. Its mosaic jewel-like quality, both in color and scale, form an admirable contrast to the austere central medallion.

The archaic simplicity of the drawing, the wide spacing of the central elements, the architectural rigidity of the border, all bespeak early work. A further and more specific evidence that the style is really early is to be found in the great medallion and animal carpet recently loaned to the Poldi-Pezzoli Museum in Milan by the Queen Mother Margharita, which carries the earliest date yet found on any carpet—1521.⁽¹⁶⁾ This carpet gives every evidence of being considerably earlier than the Milan piece.

NORTHWEST PERSIA, BEGINNING XVI CENTURY MEDALLION CARPET

2

The field is a greenish blue, varying from true green almost to turquoise. It is dominated by a complex star medallion in pure red with inlet interstices of pale fawn. At the center of the medallion is a beautiful lobed star. There are bar pendants in white and escutcheons in crimson. The ornamentation of these medallion pendants consists of various forms of geometrically drawn lotus flowers vigorously arranged with rather rigid branching foliage. The field is decorated with various combinations of arabesques on angular spiral stems, which interlace to form a variety of beautiful patterns. The principal colors are various shades of green, saffron, terra cotta, dark brown, and deep and pale blue.

The border consists of interweaving broad-banded arabesques in gold, wine red, turquoise blue and ivory.

Pile, wool; warp, 4-ply cotton; weft, 3-ply wool, 2 after each row of knots; knot, Turkish.

L. 14 ft. 10 in.
w. 6 ft.
Lent by
Bernheimer Brothers.

This is one of the most famous and beautiful carpets of this type. The color combinations are unusual and delightful. The powerfully constructed medallion, the clear and rugged drawing of the principal ornaments and the slow, firm rhythm of the border endow the rug with exceptional strength, which is enhanced and relieved by the delicate starry quality of the tiny scrolls and the little flecks of white. The medallion has earlier antecedents both in Rhages pottery⁽¹⁷⁾ and in late Sassanian brocades, and indeed, as early as Achaemenian and Assyrian times. This form was taken over into some of the

⁽¹⁶⁾ See Footnote No. 11.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Cf. e.g. a Rhages bowl in the collection of Parish Watson illustrated, Arthur Upham Pope, *Oriental Rugs as Fine Art*, International Studio December, 1922; and also for a similar bowl R. M. Riefstahl, *The Parish Watson Collection of Muhammadan Potteries*, No. 24, p. 133.



Detail of Medallion Carpet

No. 1

PLATE II

early Asia Minor carpets (Cf. No. 38), such as the Oushaks, and is really the parent of the star forms on such carpets as the little Bergamo No. 47.

NORTHWEST PERSIA, BEGINNING XVI CENTURY MEDALLION AND ANIMAL CARPET

3

In the center of an indigo field covered with angularly drawn trees and plants and various animals, including deer, lions and leopards, is an eight-pointed star medallion in red, with bar pendants in ivory ornamented with large lotus flanked by pairs of ducks, pendant escutcheons in mulberry bearing pairs of blue fish and again pendant, grape leaf palmettes in fawn. The medallion is centered on a white stellate rosette decorated with four ducks, and is ornamented with blue flaming lions, tawny lions, gazelles, phoenix and scattered lotus. In each corner is an old gold quadrant bearing blue khilins and phoenix fighting, with a half bar pendant in mulberry decorated with a blue duck and a half escutcheon in gold ornamented with a blue palmette.

The border is mulberry with widely spaced palmettes alternating deep blue and old gold, in each a mulberry or copper-colored lion seizing a green or sapphire deer. The palmettes are connected by wide undulating ivory bands carrying clear, beautifully spaced lotus and foliage. The outer guard stripe is old gold with lion masks and animal heads in blue and mulberry. The inner guard stripe is cerulean with rosettes and lotus predominantly in old gold.

Pile, wool; warp, 2-ply cotton, half doubled under; weft, silk, 2 after each row of knots; knot, Persian, 16 vertical, 16 horizontal, 256 to the square inch.

L. 14 ft. 7 in.
w. 7 ft. 8 in.
Lent by
Kelekian.

The early Persian carpets were very quiet and subdued in tone, for a certain austere reserve is, and always has been, a mark of the cultivated classes in Persia. While they have a keen relish in beautiful color, they are more interested in beautiful drawing and design, and feel that a mastery of color relations, the harmonious synthesis of many tones, rather than the blazing brilliance of a few is the mark of the master. That this was a court carpet is perfectly plain from the finesse with which it is executed, and the highly sophisticated taste that it shows, particularly in the ample spacing of all elements. The animals are from a master's hand. Intense energy and individual character are crowded into these telling silhouettes. It is one of the earliest, perhaps the earliest carpet, woven for the Persian court that remains to us.

NORTHWEST PERSIA, KURDESTAN, EARLY XVI CENTURY MEDALLION CARPET

4

The field of intense red is covered with angular, powerful, widely spaced half arabesques, palmettes, lotus flowers, rosettes and foliage, all rigidly drawn, principally in gold, emerald, dark blue, black and white.

The center medallion consists of a succession of concentric superimposed medallions. Reading the entire design from the inside to the outside we find (1) a tiny four-petalled yel-



Medallion Carpet

No. 2

low flower; (2) a black star in red outline; (3) a white hexagon in black and yellow outline with geometrical figures in gold, red and green; (4) a deep red quadrilateral with projecting points outlined in white, ornamented by a circlet of massive lotus blossoms in green and saffron on green stems; (5) a dark blue quadrilateral medallion outlined in white with sixteen cusped points, with a heavy angular ornamentation of lotus blossoms and rosettes on straight stems in saffron, red, blue, green and white; (6) a green quadrilateral outlined in black with a wide scrolling margin in gold, carrying an angular vine with leaves in red, ivory and black. In the corners are quadrants similar to the central medallion.

The border consists of a highly geometrical rendition of broad-banded arabesques, alternating cerulean blue and an orange-copper. These embrace alternating red and white quatrefoils, each carrying a lotus-flower decoration, and each on a background of deep emerald. The outer guard stripe has white and gold blossoms on straight parallel green vines; the inner guard stripe, an angular undulating vine in emerald, saffron and red on white, the design changing across either end, introducing arabesques and more blossoms.

Pile, wool; warp, natural color wool, 2-ply, one thread slightly depressed; weft, dark brownish red, 3 after each row of knots alternately over and under; knot, Turkish, 9 vertical, 8 horizontal, 72 to the square inch, appearance at back slightly wavy, but very fine and regular.

L. 12 ft. 3 in.
w. 8 ft.
Lent Anonymously.

It is difficult to assign an exact date and provenance to this carpet. No really similar piece has been found or published, although the general plan is common in most sixteenth century Northwest Persia carpets. But no early Persian carpet, either from the Northwest or any other region, exhibits colors of such purity and intensity. That wool could be endowed with such brilliance will surprise even the experienced. These colors glow as if illumined by a hidden fire and yet they are so adroitly balanced, contrasted and mingled that there is no sense of harshness. The principal conditions of such an achievement are to be found not only in the virile and sophisticated taste of those who planned the carpet, but in such specific factors as superb wool and remarkable dyes, each of which is essential to the other if really great effects are contemplated.

Rugs have occasionally appeared that we know were woven in the Kurdish District in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with intense dyes and lustrous wool similar to those in this carpet. As most of the Northwest Persia carpets of affiliated design are of much dryer, duller wool, it is reasonable to suppose that this carpet was woven in the Kurdish District for some local noble who, following the general plan of the Northwest Persia carpets, felt, and justly, that he could deepen and intensify their color.

An argument could be made for the attribution of this carpet to Western Asia Minor. The construction is similar in a number of points, and the patterns have an angularity to be found in some of the early Oushaks, but no carpet surely identified as early Western Asia Minor has ever been published that has so many features characteristic of the Northwest Persia patterns. This carpet shows far more identities in design and drawing with the Northwest Persia medallion carpets than with anything known from Asia Minor.

The carpet is deserving of extended study. It was found in Bombay about twenty years ago and came into the American market labeled "Hispano-Moresque," a convenient term commonly used to cover all kinds of rugs whose identification is doubtful or difficult.



Medallion and Animal Carpet

No. 3

NORTHWEST PERSIA, XVIII CENTURY

5

GARDEN CARPET

In the center is a canal indicated by zigzag blue lines on a deep crimson ground with side canals of similar pattern. The rest of the field is divided into eight rectangular areas representing flower beds, each of which is in turn divided into squares containing conventionalized flowers and trees in rose, ivory, green and light blue. These beds are surrounded by similar floral devices. The border consists of a strong reciprocal between two white guard stripes with blocklike leaves on straight stems.

Pile, wool; warp, cotton; weft, light blue cotton, 2 after each row of knots; knot, Turkish, 72(?) to the square inch.

L. 22 ft.
W. 9 ft. 4 in.
Lent by
S. Kent Costikyan

It is generally thought that these patterns represent a continuation of the famous Spring Carpet of Chosroes which was captured at Ctesiphon when the Arabs defeated the Persians in the seventh century. The contemporary account quoted in most of the rug books⁽¹⁸⁾ describes a vast carpet of incredible magnificence, which represented a garden with canals, flowers and trees worked in silk, gold and precious stones. We cannot be sure that the Spring Carpet followed the same design as this carpet, though the scheme is congenial to Persian taste. It may be that the continuity of tradition is principally literary. But the garden loomed so large in Persian life, a source of joy and comfort in a land of brilliant light, frequent heat and much aridity, that from the beginning it has been a symbol for Paradise, and it is probable that in every stage of Persian art efforts have been made to capture and express its special charm. The carpet shows the usual plan of Persian gardens even today, formal beds divided by water courses.

A number of carpets of this type are in existence. A small but very lovely one, formerly in the Lamm collection, was given by Mr. Ballard to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. There is an older but very fragmentary piece in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, and a piece not as old or as large in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The close affiliation of some of the minor patterns with Kurdish carpets, the dates of which we know fairly well, as well as the width of the minor borders, makes it impossible to place the carpet earlier than the second half of the eighteenth century, although some writers have thought this type much earlier.

CARPETS FROM KASHAN AND WESTERN PERSIA

There can be no doubt that a great many of the finest carpets of the sixteenth century were woven at Kashan. It was the greatest industrial city of Persia, famous for its pottery as well as for numerous and beautiful textiles. It no doubt contained a variety of carpet-weaving shops using slightly different techniques and favoring different styles. The definition of this still hypothetical class cannot be attempted until more technical analyses of early carpets are completed. The Ardebil carpet, which is almost certainly Kashan work, and the red silk carpets which are even in India today called Kashanis, might form a working base for the determination of the class.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Cf. e.g. W. A. Hawley, *Oriental Rugs*, p. 76-



Medallion Carpet

No. 4

We know from contemporary accounts that looms were located at Hamadan that were weaving carpets for the court.⁽¹⁹⁾ But the characteristic work of these looms has not yet been identified. Mumford's suggestion that No. 8 is from Western Persia is at least plausible.⁽²⁰⁾ There has been a survival in this region of carpets laid out around a long central panel with cusped ends, a not very common plan, and the liberal use of camels' hair which carpet No. 8 shows is, as Mumford says, quite characteristic of the Hamadan region, but the information is not yet at hand for defining this class.

PERSIA, KASHAN, 1539

6

CARPET FROM THE MOSQUE OF ARDEBIL

A field of deep lustrous blue is closely covered with an elaborate and graceful tracery of leaves and blossoms on sweeping spirals of delicate interlacing stems which collide, cross and recross in a subtle and intricate maze that half reveals and half conceals numerous patterns of exceeding beauty. The design focuses on a great star-like medallion in gentle golden tones, from whose cusped and pinnacled margin depend sixteen oval cartouches in various colors and with varied interior ornamentation.⁽²¹⁾ Two beautiful rose and blue mosque lamps hang from the cartouches on the central axis. The medallion is conceived and executed in a masterly fashion. Around a central escutcheon, pale blue with a circlet of lotus blossoms, four sets of arabesques of exceptional elegance and grace are joined so that the contour of each repeats the contour of a lobe of the medallion. Delicately shaped cloud bands flutter in and out of the more formal and emphatic arabesques.

Part of the original guard stripes of the border remain: cloud bands in alternating position superimposed on a subordinate pattern of vines and blossoms. The remainder of the border is missing, as are parts of the field. The border is pieced out by sections of a modern Ferraghan.

Pile, wool; warp, silk; weft, silk, 3 after every row of knots; knot, Persian, 23 vertical, 21 horizontal, 483 to the square inch.

L. 23 ft. 11 in.
w. 13 ft. 5 in.
Lent by
Duveen

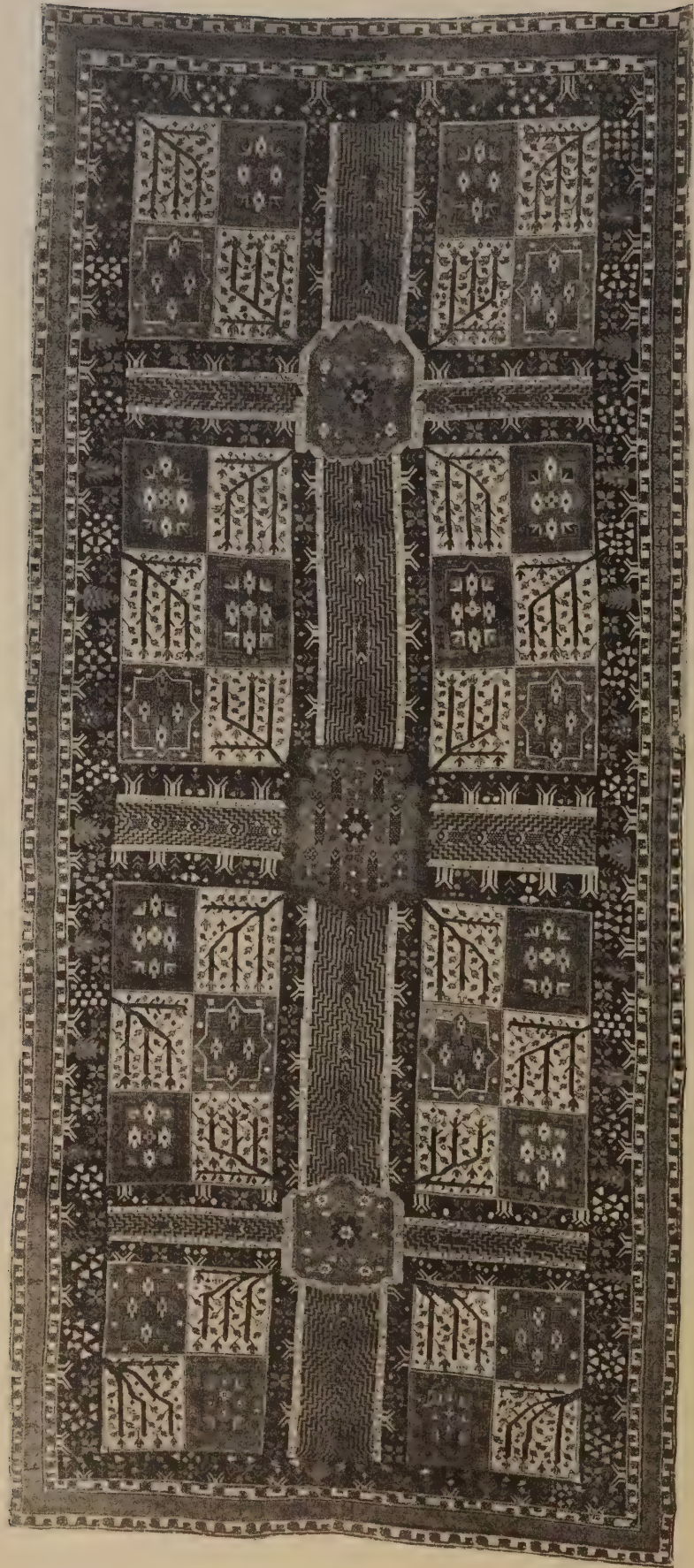
Despite its fragmentary condition (it was sacrificed to complete its pendant in the Victoria and Albert Museum) no one needs to be told that this is one of the masterpieces of the art of rug weaving, or indeed of any art. It justifies all of the praises that have been bestowed on Persian carpets.

That the rug was actually woven in Kashan, rather than in Ardebil seem highly probable when we consider, as many writers on rugs have failed to do, the practical conditions under which a great carpet must be woven. In the first place, one man alone could not have made the two Ardebil carpets in several lifetimes. Such work calls for a large and highly trained staff accustomed to following the will of the master—carders, spinners, loom riggers, and a large crew of weavers. Such an outfit was not easily moved from place to place in a country like Persia. The transportation of carpets, even larger and heavier than these, on the other hand, has always been a matter of course. In the second place, the carpet weaver is especially firmly tied to the soil and not free to wander, as did many of the poets, calligraphers, tile and metal workers and archi-

⁽¹⁹⁾ Hammer, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiche*, Budapest 1834, Teil I, s. 369, quoted by Werner Grote-Hasenbalg, *Der Orientteppich* s. 123.

⁽²⁰⁾ John Kimberly Mumford, *The Yerkes Collection of Oriental Carpets*, XXI.

⁽²¹⁾ The ornamentation of the lowest cartouche is identical with that of a piece of Turkish faience of the sixteenth century, shown beside the rug, which was made in Syria by Persian workmen.



Garden Carpet

No. 5

fects, because the same dyeing formula will give astonishingly different results, owing to the different chemical properties of the water, even in neighboring villages. Contemporary references show that this was just as true in the sixteenth century as today. Moreover, dyeing was a specialized and secret craft, so that even aside from differences of water, it would be improbable that the dyers of one region would have exactly the same shades as those in another. Thus a weaver who had learned his color schemes in one place and was used to certain tones would be seriously handicapped when trying to secure fine results in another locality. And in the third place, only a well-established and experienced weaver would have been entrusted with so important an order. Maksoud of Kashan must have been a noted man in his craft, the director of a large and highly organized workshop. Lesser weavers might possibly seek opportunities in the remoter provinces in spite of the distance from the court and the novelties and difficulties of the environment, but it is not probable that as great a man as Maksoud must have been would have left Kashan, the greatest center of Persian textile art at the time. In short, the facts all point to Kashan as the place of origin.⁽²²⁾

It is the inscription in the cartouche, a feature that gives the two carpets a value even in addition to that conferred by their extraordinary beauty, which has been interpreted to mean that Maksoud did his work in Kashan, was indeed a slave attached as head weaver to the Mosque at Ardebil. It reads:

"I have no refuge in the world other than thy threshold. My head has no protection other than this porchway. The work of a slave of the holy place, Maksoud of Kashan in the year 942" (i. e. 1539 A. D.)

But only those unfamiliar with the habits of speech in Persia and the Near East generally could have made this inference, for the first two lines are a quotation from Hafiz⁽²³⁾ and all the language is figurative. It contains no information except that Maksoud of Kashan, a devout man, superintended the weaving of these two carpets in 1539. Any patriotic and religious man in Persia at the time would have been apt to use similar words in referring to Ardebil, which stood especially high in the respect and affection of all Persians. And as for the status of Maksoud, "Thy slave" is a common salutation in Persia and means hardly more than "Good morning, Sir".

The date is indisputable and of precious importance. It has been the starting point for all dating of sixteenth century carpets, and its importance is scarcely minimized by the discovery of an earlier carpet in Italy dated 1521,⁽²⁴⁾ since the latter carpet is of such a different style the implications of its date are confined chiefly to the region of Northwest Persia, while the more floral character of the Ardebil carpets relates them to a greater variety of Persian weavings.

If the attribution of these carpets to Kashan be correct, the complete and scientific analysis of them ought to furnish a canon for the identification of many of the finer carpets of the sixteenth century which are now nameless.

PERSIA, KASHAN (?), SECOND HALF XVI CENTURY FLORAL MEDALLION CARPET

7

A central cusped medallion decorated with delicately swinging arabesques has dependent from it on the central axis beautifully serrated palmettes whence depend again escutcheons.

⁽²²⁾ Mr. B. W. Stainton of Vincent Robinsons, a specially well qualified judge in these matters, is in entire agreement with this interpretation.

⁽²³⁾ Cf. Kendrick and Tattersall, *Hand Woven Carpets*, p. 18.

⁽²⁴⁾ Cf. Footnote No. 11.



Carpet from the Mosque of Ardebil

No. 6

PLATE I

All these are in old rose, ivory and gold. The ground of deep blue is richly covered with a profusion of lotus flowers, various leaves and blossoms set on widely curving spiral stems which make intricate patterns. In the wide border of old rose are set small ivory acanthus leaf palmettes separated by lotus blossoms. The ivory guard stripes bear undulating vines and flowers.

Pile, wool; warp, 4-ply pinkish cotton; weft, goats' hair, 3 after each row of knots; knot, Persian, 16 vertical, 14 horizontal, 224 to the square inch.

L. 13 ft. 4 in.
w. 5 ft. 10 in.
Lent by
M. & R. Stora.

The carpet is important not only for its obvious beauty, but also for the close resemblance of the ornamentation of the main field to that of the Ardebil carpet. The colors are similar, many of the botanical details identical, the pencil-like drawing of the tendrils and the spacing of the ornamentation practically the same. Although this carpet is smaller, later and simpler, it is so near in style to the Ardebil carpet it seems certain that there is some close connection. It does not seem to be a copy, but rather the continuation of the same tradition.

WESTERN (?) PERSIA, THIRD QUARTER XVI CENTURY ANIMAL CARPET

8

A round central medallion in dark brown camels' hair with semi-circular groups of varicolored winged Genii at their feasts in the Gardens of Paradise, is placed on a panel-shaped field with cusped ends. The unusual pendants to the medallion are formed by a pair of confronted peacocks under a canopy standing on a graceful bracket, a common feature in the later Vase and Polonaise carpets.

The ground color of the panel-shaped field is of deep ruby red covered with a resplendent variety of palmettes, lotus flowers, tiny blossoms and delicate tendrils across which roam in various positions of attack, flight and combat most of the wild animals of Persia—lions, tigers, leopards, lynx, foxes, wolves, deer, gazelles, rabbits and the Chinese Khilin, in numerous tones of ivory, yellow, green, black, blue and copper.

The corners, defined by the cusped arches of the central panel, are in light jade green, carrying an intricate and powerful arrangement of spiral arabesques in white and red against a subordinated accompaniment of small flowers and vines.

Because of the desire to subordinate the border to the character of the main field, the pattern is not altogether easy to read, but it consists of an ovoid palmette in ruby red depending from a huge undulating vine of the same color, which has the outline of broad arabesques. The arabesque bands are decorated with lions and other animals in like tones, the palmettes with lotus flowers and pairs of birds, and the golden interstices with small energetic symmetrical cloud bands in blue-black.

The inner guard stripe in dark brown carries a lengthy inscription in Persian.

Some of the colors are unusual, the olive green, the deep brown and pale rusty red are not often found in early carpets.

Pile, wool; warp and weft, yellowish silk, 3 weft threads after each row of knots; knot, Persian, 21 vertical, 18 horizontal, 378 to the square inch.

L. 16 ft. 8 in.
w. 6 ft. 8 in.
Lent by
Parish Watson.

Although the carpet is unusual, almost to the point of uniqueness, it has some affiliation with at least two other carpets: the great carpet in red, gold and dark blue



Detail of the Carpet from the Mosque of Ardebil

No. 6

PLATE II

which is in the Victoria and Albert Museum,⁽²⁵⁾ and which Dr. Bode has long regarded as the finest of all known rugs, and the Sarre animal carpet and its pendant in the Metropolitan Museum.⁽²⁶⁾

The rich bracket reminds one of the corresponding figures in the Victoria and Albert Museum piece. The ground color, some of the botanical details and many of the animals, bear a striking resemblance to the Sarre carpet. The details of the drawing are a little different, but the resemblance is sufficiently close to make the assumption reasonable that both carpets were woven from cartoons of the same designer.

On account of the strong framing of the panel and the powerful constraint of the corners, the main border has been subordinated and no longer presents the strong contrast with the field which we expect in early Persian carpets. This subordination is, however, aesthetically correct, for the delicacy of the pattern and the movement in the main field would have been oppressively circumscribed if the border were any less congenial.

From the Yerkes Collection Published in color, John Kimberly Mumford—The Yerkes Collection of Carpets) Plate No. 21.

WESTERN PERSIA, END XVI CENTURY

ANIMAL CARPET

The ground of the field is a deep, glowing scarlet; a round center medallion, large corners, and half escutcheons projecting from the sides are in ivory. The center medallion is placed in the middle of a larger medallion, cusped and pinnacled in gold outline, containing a decoration of four pairs of confronting peacocks on a vigorous angular lattice-work of stems with eight lotus blossoms radiating from the center. A palmette and a beautiful bell-shaped escutcheon depend from the tips of the medallion on the long axis. The corners carry pheasants on foliage like that in the medallion. The remainder of the field is vigorously ornamented with lions, gazelles, leopards, wolves and wild goats dashing across a maze of emphatic and brilliantly drawn lotus blossoms, smaller flowers and foliage that are bound together by both straight and curving stems. The border consists of pairs of peacocks against foliage similar to the field, alternating with pairs of fish, enclosing lotus blossoms, the fish leaping upward to seize pairs of ducks.

Pile, wool; warp, double cotton of varying thickness and colors—white, blue and rose; weft, 3-ply of very fine dark goats' hair; sides overcast on two very heavy cotton cords; knot, Persian.

L. 14 ft. 4 in.
w. 7 ft. 10 in.
Lent by
Bernheimer Brothers.

This carpet is important, both historically and aesthetically. It epitomizes a long history of styles. The representation of pairs of fish comes from China and appears in quite similar form in an early thirteenth century miniature belonging to Kelekian. The pairs of peacocks are Byzantine in origin, while some of the gazelles closely resemble those on the Sassanian rock carvings at Tak-i-Bostan done in the sixth century.

⁽²⁵⁾ For illustrations, see Guide to the Collection of Carpets in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Bode, *Vorderasiatische Knüpfteppiche*, 3 Auflage, Abb. 14, 15 (Eng. trans. Riefstahl).

⁽²⁶⁾ Both of these carpets have been many times published. Cf. for example, John Kimberly Mumford, *The Yerkes Collection of Carpets*, No. XVIII, and especially *Alt Orientalische Teppiche*, No. VII.



Floral Medallion Carpet

No. 7

Aesthetically, it is one of the most brilliant and vigorous of Persian weavings. Quite apart from the vivacity of the animals, the drawing itself, while simple, is clear and strong, full of a variety that is unexpected and stimulating without being confusing. Despite the forcefulness of the drawing, many of the patterns are of exceeding beauty and elegance, as for example the fine lotus between the pairs of leopards at the end of the field, or the pheasants in the foliage of the corners. The deep and glowing colors well suit the pattern. The clear scarlet is illumined and intensified by ivory and gold, the copper saffron and deep blue are vitalizing colors, and the small areas of white provide a staccato animation. The pale green margins of the palmettes mediating the transition to the scarlet of the field is but one of many intelligent devices used to compose colors so forceful in themselves that if ignorantly and carelessly combined they would fatally conflict.

There are interesting variations within the carpet itself. The pair of gazelles below the medallion are balanced by a pair of asses above. The lions below have long noses, those above, short. There are differences also in drawing some of the flowers. Just what these differences comport is not easy to say. It may indicate that a number of people worked on the carpet or that the head weaver was himself disposed to variety and experimentation. In any case, it shows that the carpet was not slavishly following a painter's cartoon.

There is no data on which to base a confident attribution. The character of the warp, as well as the intensity of colors, might reasonably be held to indicate Western Persia.

CARPETS FROM EASTERN PERSIA, HERAT

SO-CALLED "ISPAHAN" CARPET

The most famous of all Persian carpets in America is the so-called "Ispahan," a very handsome rug with palmettes and scrolling vines on a field of deep claret red with a wide green border carrying elaborate palmettes. These carpets are nearly always called "Ispahan, sixteenth century." None were woven at Isfahan and only a few date from the sixteenth century. Dr. Martin has shown good reasons for assigning them to Herat ⁽²⁷⁾, and evidence from India shows that they were woven in vast quantities, especially in Lahore by colonies of weavers that came down from the Herat region. The carpet rapidly degenerated and the bulk of those in the sixteenth century are without artistic merit. ⁽²⁸⁾ They were manufactured in haste. The designs soon became perfunctory and confused, the material and the weaving cheap and coarse, yet so great is the tyranny of names and established fashions that high prices are still paid for pieces without merit, merely because they carry the coveted label. Herat was in the sixteenth century a greater city than Isfahan, and the descendants of the Mogul princes who had established their courts there, attracted the greatest artists and literateurs from almost the whole of Asia. The early carpet design reflected a great deal of the highly sophisticated taste and exquisite perfection which marked the Herat school of painting. Chinese influence was strong as is seen in the numerous cloud bands which appear in the earlier pieces and which remain in clumsy form even in the latest weavings. Indeed, one of the characteristic marks, aside from the color scheme of these carpets, is the placing of a ribbon-like cloud band along the middle axis and often in groups of four around the center.

⁽²⁷⁾ Martin, *op. cit.* p. 69.

⁽²⁸⁾ Cf. Arthur Upham Pope, *Oriental Rugs as Fine Art, The Story of the Ispahans*, *Int. Studio*, February, 1923.



Animal Carpet

No. 9

Although this was the usual scheme, the early rugs of this general type show a considerable variety and some of them contain elaborate animal groups, such as numbers 12 and 13, but the difficult animal drawing was given up by the end of the sixteenth century, saving for a few sporadic instances, such as the piece recently sold from the American Art Galleries⁽²⁹⁾ and a much later piece in the Kunstgewerbe Museum, in Cologne.⁽³⁰⁾

EASTERN PERSIA, REGION OF HERAT, MIDDLE XVI CENTURY
FRAGMENT OF FLORAL CARPET

I O

A wide border of several tones of glowing emerald green is ornamented with alternating large and smaller palmettes, the larger flanked by confronted phoenix, the smaller bearing lion masks, on a background design of two orders of scrolling vines alternately pale green and red, with varied blossoms and small lotus flowers. The outer wide guard stripe of red is decorated with Chinese cloud bands in light and dark blue on a running vine. The inner guard stripe bears a delicate undulating vine with lotus blossoms on pale gold.

The field is claret red with a lotus palmette in gold and black, flanked by flowering trees with various birds, smaller palmettes, tiny blossoms and scattered cloud bands of various sizes and colors.

Pile, wool; double warp, fawn silk; weft, fawn silk, 3 after each row of knots; knot, Persian, 19 vertical, 21 horizontal, 399 to the square inch.

L. 8 ft. 2 in.
w. 2 ft. 3 in.
Lent by
Kelekian.

This fragment ranks with any example of the rug weaver's art. It is constructed on the general plan of the Herat carpets, but it so far surpasses the usual type that one might doubt the attribution and see in it the work of some special palace looms. But if it were woven in the west, it would probably have been in Kashan, as the fawn silk weft is somewhat akin to that of the Ardebil carpet. It is quite possible that the Herat type was rendered by the weavers of Kashan, probably the greatest of Persia in the sixteenth century, although they reckon ill who minimize the importance of the achievements of Herat. So much glorious work was produced there it is imprudent to set any limits to the skill of its weavers.

But wherever woven, it is a document so eloquent, so charged with inspiration, so expressive of perfect knowledge, sure and mature, that this piece alone is sufficient to substantiate any claims that have been made that the finest carpets should rank as works of art.

EASTERN PERSIA, HERAT, MIDDLE XVI CENTURY
FRAGMENTS OF ANIMAL CARPET

I I

The fragments here assembled into a tolerable unity consist apparently of three strips of border sewed together to constitute the field and three nearly complete sections of corner.

⁽²⁹⁾ No. 62 in the Collection of Vitall and Leopold Benguiat. Illustrated in color in catalogue published by the American Art Association, December, 1925.

⁽³⁰⁾ It should be explained that such terms as Herat, Oushak, or Bergamo do not mean necessarily that the carpets were woven in that particular place but in a region dominated by that city or market. The title Herat Group or Oushak Group, as the case might be, would be more exact but too clumsy for repeated use.



Fragment of Floral Carpet

No. 10

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Kuba was an industrial city of some magnitude and its wares, especially carpets, could be found in markets as far separated as Jerusalem and Isfahan. Carpets of this type were probably planned to profit by the immense prestige of the Isfahan Vase carpets and their very thick and hard foundation is perhaps an imitation of the double warp pieces woven in Jushaghan. They do catch some of the magnificence of their distinguished models but, as in this piece, they never wholly disguise their peasant origin, and the strong and broad patterns are a bit provincial though withal honest and engaging.



Caucasus Carpet

quadrants, and one indeterminate section, possibly part of a central medallion, have been used for the corners. The border consists of part of two guard stripes, one carrying a Persian inscription and the other lotus and tiny blossoms.

The patterns consist of peony palmettes in fawn, green and crimson crisply outlined in dainty white cotton, alternating with lotus flowers in similar tones, each originally with silver, placed amid a field of rich, varied, very sharply drawn leaves and blossoms on two borders of stems, one buff and red with double white outlines, the other an almost invisibly fine single line, all on a background of sapphire blue. Pheasants, finches and other birds are scattered through the foliage.

Three of the corner sections are composed of strong-stemmed, graceful, intertwining grape vines with lotus blossoms and very unusual grape clusters flanked by a flower spray and finch in citron, buff and red on an emerald green ground. The interior section contains a remarkably drawn heron. The other corner, originally with silver thread, contains a few lotus flowers, a leopard, lynx and gazelle, in buff and pale blue, and a rampant copper-orange tiger.

Pile, wool and cotton, originally with passages of silver; warp double, fawn silk; weft fawn, silk 3 after each row of knots; knot Persian, vertical 24, horizontal 22, 528 to the square inch.

L. 4 ft.
W. 2 ft. 3 in.
Lent by
P. W. French & Co.

In judging this exquisite remnant of a once great work of art all considerations of general composition must be ignored. The arrangement of the stems in the corners is indeed masterful, but for the rest it is the quality of the drawing and color that warrants study and admiration. Such firmness of texture, such exquisite delineation, such variety, such freedom of spacing—as if the flowers were scattered on the field by some graceful gesture—these are so rare as to furnish a test by which other designs and weavings are to be judged. Its merit would be the more conspicuous if seen beside the much praised expensive later carpets from this region. It is pathetic that the force, the brilliance, the elegance and conscientious finish here exemplified was so soon to be ruined by haste, by economic opportunity and the pressure of foreign taste with unsympathetic ideals and with little knowledge of what rug-weaving could at best accomplish.

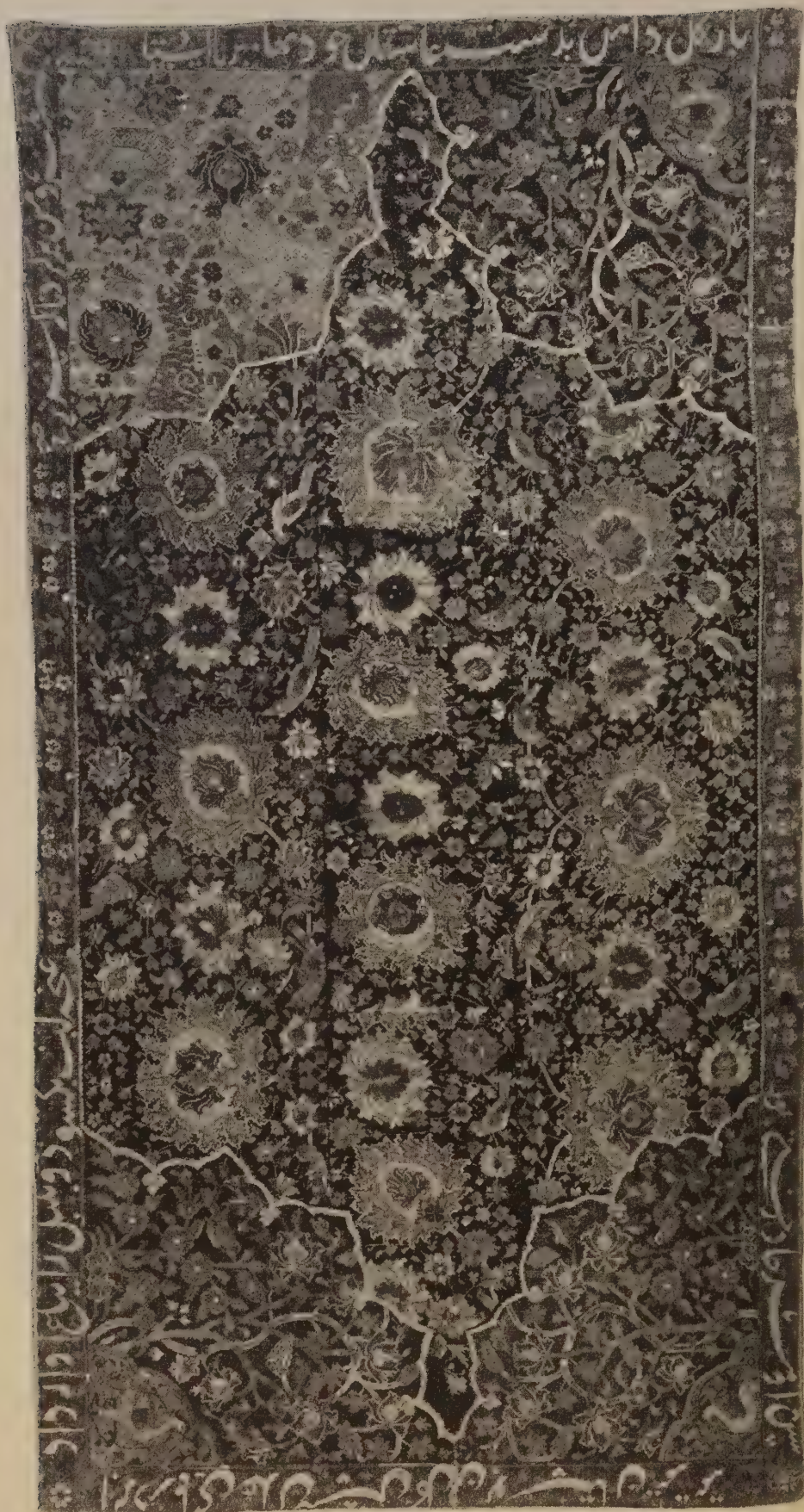
Though small, its rebuke to slovenly work of all kinds is formidable—and the standard of quality which it sets has authority for every branch of art.

EASTERN PERSIA, HERAT, MIDDLE XVI CENTURY

12

ANIMAL CARPET

The ground is a richly shaded crimson, fluctuating between old rose and deep claret, carrying a magnificent ornamentation of superbly drawn complex palmettes and lotus blossoms of various types and sizes in numerous shades of emerald, gold, sapphire, rose and ashes of roses, silver blue and fawn, decoratively placed amid delicately scrolling foliage, interspersed with fluttering ribbon-like asymmetrical cloud bands and beautifully drawn, superbly executed scenes of animal combat in gold, blue-black, fawn and ivory. The most conspicuous of these shows a copper-red lion felling a huge spotted deer. Wolves and khilins dash about while leopards crouch in waiting.



Fragment of Animal Carpet

No. 11

Pile, wool; warp, very fine linen, 3 threads; weft, 2 terra cotta silk, one 3-ply linen, 3 after each row of knots; one warp thread doubled under but not entirely concealed; knot Persian, 13 vertical, 16 horizontal, 208 to the square inch.

L. 13 ft. 2 in.
W. 5 ft. 10 in.
Lent by
DeMotte.

This carpet belongs to a very small and very famous group, of which a splendid fragment is in the Vienna Museum für Kunst und Industrie. This fragment will be published in color in the first volume of the new Vienna book. Other fragments are in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs. Another large and almost intact carpet of this type was in the Exhibition at Munich. The fame of these carpets rests upon an ample foundation of merit. The variety, subtlety and charm of their colors would be sufficient alone to establish them in the first rank. Here nearly twenty tones are distinguishable. Of green alone, there are olive, emerald, Nile and golden. The yellows also are pure and mellow, very close to the color of gold. The claret red of the field takes on a vibrant glow from the many arbrashes or "shadow bands," zones of varying shades that enliven and enrich the entire surface. The drawing is worthy of careful study. The great palmettes and exceedingly beautiful lotus show the influence of the court painters and their Chinese models. The evenness and perfection of the spirals, the sparkle of the star-like blossoms, provide both grace and animation of delightful quality.

Quite as important as the merits of the individual designs is the highly successful and original way in which they have been composed to make an enchanting ensemble. Each element retains its own individuality, yet the mutually enhancing forms have been assembled with such easy and spontaneous grace that the whole composition imparts a contagious exuberance.

EASTERN PERSIA, HERAT, LAST THIRD XVI CENTURY ANIMAL CARPET

13

The ground is a lustrous claret red. The center group consists of a subordinate quatrefoil medallion in comparatively small scale around which are arranged in a rectangle two conventionalized flaming halos, two huge lotus flowers and, on the diagonals, four smaller lotus. This group is flanked by large palmettes and flaming halos set on a diamond-shaped framework. The interstices are filled with small flowers and various birds and animals: leopards, gazelles and ducks symmetrically arranged in pairs. The colors are gold, fawn, ivory, deep blue, turquoise, silver blue, crimson, rose and dark and pale green.

The border consists of alternating rosettes and bar cartouches decorated with lotus flowers connected by smaller eight-pointed stars, on a ground of deep blue green richly ornamented with lotus flowers, leaves and cloud bands. The inner border carries a complex group of large flowers and tiny blossoms set on interweaving stems on a copper-saffron ground. This piece is composed of sections taken from a large carpet. ⁽³¹⁾

Lent by
Mrs. Edith Rockefeller
McCormick.

The elements and general layout of this design persisted in Persian carpet weaving longer than any of the other typical sixteenth century carpet patterns. A much simplified edition of it was woven in the region of Herat well into the eighteenth century, and especially after the capture of Herat by Nadir Shah in 1731, the weavers who were transferred to various places in Western Persia carried with them many of the elements

⁽³¹⁾ This carpet will be fully described and discussed and illustrated in color with supplementary plates in a forthcoming catalogue of the carpets belonging to Mrs. Edith Rockefeller McCormick.



Animal Carpet

No. 12

of the pattern. The flaming halo is common in Kurdistan and Karabagh rugs well into the nineteenth century. The diamond lattice framework became an essential element in Sehna and Feraghan rugs. Even before the victory of Nadir Shah the flaming halo began to appear in the rugs of the West. It is to be seen in almost perfect form on a carpet from the Kuba region, belonging to E. Beghian of London, dated 1721. The pattern itself has its immediate origin in the flaming halos of fifteenth and early sixteenth century painters, who used it in almost exactly the same form. They, in turn, derived it from the Buddhist halos of Central Asia, which as early as the tenth century appear as detached patterns.⁽³²⁾ The special charm of the piece consists in velvety texture, the mellowness and variety of the colors and the firm manner in which the rich and powerful decorative elements have been composed.

EASTERN PERSIA, HERAT, MIDDLE OR THIRD QUARTER XVI CENTURY

14

FLORAL CARPET

A field of deep green blue is gorgeously ornamented by a rich and brilliant array of huge palmettes, numerous styles of lotus flowers, pairs of phoenix and many cloudbands with asymmetrical loops placed at various angles throughout, in ivory, rose, turquoise and celadon. The main floral motives and dainty star-like interstitial blossoms are set on two orders of even, delicate spirals on conflicting circuits, one in pale green, the other in pale rose. The entire design moves in stately measure symmetrically about an invisible center.

The ivory border bears oval escutcheons alternately olive brown and crimson, connected by wide interweaving undulating arabesque bands in red and bluish green, decorated with lotus flowers and blossoms in blue and copper. The outer guard stripe consists of interweaving arabesques in gold, red and blue. The inner guard stripe bears long and rosette cartouches alternating, in light blue, dark blue, and red on old gold.

Pile wool; warp, cotton; weft, 3 after each row of knots, linen; knot Persian, 13 vertical, 16 horizontal, 208 to the square inch.

L. 24 ft. 5 in.
W. 10 ft. 1 in.
Lent by Kelekian.

Not all of the so-called "Ispahans" are on a red ground with a green border. While that style was always popular and became stereotyped by the European demand, the older, quieter harmonies of blue and gold such as we find dominant in the Ardebil carpet (Cf. No. 6) and some of the pieces from Northwest Persia were quite as favored by the early designers. The perfection of this carpet, which is evident when compared with the commoner types, consists not merely in the quietly satisfying colors and perfect drawing, but in the conception which reveals an unerring knowledge of the vital moving qualities of lines so that they contagiously swing a sympathetic observer into their own easy and graceful motion. The spaced palmettes arrest this motion rhythmically like the beats in a melody, supplementing the energy of motion with the energy of position. The slowly turning arabesques of the border, moving in broader, more majestic rhythms, provide a noble and satisfying constraint for the poetic vivacity of the field.

⁽³²⁾ Cf. e.g. some of the paintings from Tuan Houang brought back by Professor Paul Pelliot and now on exhibition in the Salle Pelliot of the Musée Guimet. These will all be published shortly by Prof. Pelliot, many in color.



Floral Carpet

No. 14

EASTERN PERSIA, HERAT, SECOND HALF XVI CENTURY
SO-CALLED "ISPAHAN" CARPET

15

On a field of deep claret red exquisitely drawn palmettes and lotus blossoms of many designs and sizes are symmetrically grouped around a common center. Scrolling vines, tiny leaves and blossoms, pairs of phoenixes and numerous cloud bands in ivory, fawn, turquoise, celadon and blue black complete the design.

The border is deep velvety green with alternating palmettes and lotus blossoms surmounted by pairs of magpies against an intricate background of delicate green tendrils. The inner guard stripe of pure golden yellow carries an undulating vine while the outer one is red with blossoms in fawn, gold and ivory on crimson.

Pile wool, cotton and silver; warp double, yellow silk; weft, 3 linen, 1 fawn silk, 4 after each row of knots; knot, Persian; 18 vertical, 19 horizontal, 342, to the square inch. The areas of yellow silk were once solidly interwoven with minute ribbons of pure silver.

L. 7 ft. 1 in.
W. 4 ft. 7 in.
Lent by
Duveen Brothers.

Almost all of the so-called "sixteenth century Ispahans," of which there are not far from two thousand in America, are really seventeenth century carpets woven in Herat or in Lahore in North India, where these carpets were manufactured in vast quantities after they became popular in Europe. Sixteenth century pieces are so uncommon it is worth while when one of this character is found to note the qualities which warrant the earlier dating. The general artistic vitality, the richness of color, the skill of drawing, the careful planning of the design which must be apparent to every observer, are always marks of early work. More specific evidence is found in the color of the border which is still a deep and pure green. Later it becomes a bluish green and finally a rather dead blue. Another noteworthy feature is the perfect placing of undistorted palmettes in the corners. In the later pieces these palmettes, grossly enlarged, are sadly warped. Quite as important and perhaps less obvious is the moderate size of the border ornaments and the scrupulous way in which the tiny margins on both sides are maintained throughout. Such a margin, small though it is, sets off the border ornament giving it clarity and movement. In the later pieces these border figures come in contact with the guard stripes, a ruinous blunder which robs them of all life and movement. The clumsy, hurried, commercialized work of the seventeenth century done with an eye on the European market had no time for such subtleties, but they are the life of the art.

CARPETS FROM CENTRAL PERSIA, JOSHAGHAN GHALI

(SO-CALLED VASE CARPETS)

The vase carpets constitute a small but exceedingly important group. About twenty carpets approximately intact are known. Some of the carpets which count as whole pieces, however, are merely composed of adroitly assembled fragments and only three or four pieces are in really first-class condition. Many museums and collectors have more or less important fragments.

The reasons for this excessive rarity are to be found in the fact that the output was never large, having been almost wholly confined apparently to the court; and, in the



Floral Carpet

No. 15

second place, in the fact that the double warp, which in some ways gives great strength, was not favorable to the continuous wear the carpets received in the palaces of Isfahan, so that many were destroyed through use. The double warp makes possible a very dense pile and so permits of firm and accurate drawing, hence it was preferred despite certain disadvantages.

For a long time these carpets were thought to have been woven in Kerman, although the only evidence ever cited, principally by Dr. Martin, was very slight; but the evidence of the carpets at Kum and the very specific and confident assertions of many old Persian families that they were woven at Joshaghan Ghali, which was one of the summer residences of the court and was in every way favorably situated for carpet production, seem to be decisive for that attribution.

The general scheme of a display of flowers on a curtain-like background is common in early Persian painting, where it was no doubt inspired partly by the character of the landscape⁽³³⁾ and partly by Chinese styles.⁽³⁴⁾ Many of the individual motives are traceable to Central Asiatic sources, and there is a significant relation between the general pattern of these carpets and the seventeenth and eighteenth century embroideries from Bokhara, which show the same lattice-like division of the field and the same grandiose flower forms.

For magnificence and power, for a certain noble and markedly individual quality, these carpets rank very high. Indeed, some experts are inclined to place them near the summit of all carpet weaving. For, while lacking something of the finesse of those carpets which so closely follow the painter's art, they have preserved the essential character of textile decoration, which is an ample compensation.

The influence of these carpets was important and widespread. They were reproduced not only in Kurdestan, the Baktiari region and the Caucasus, in a rather clumsy fashion, but also in India, whither, according to Abul Fazil, the chronicler of Akbar, they were exported, and where the style was rendered with astonishing elegance and finesse. Together with the Polonaise carpets they appeared at the Turkish court also and contributed many interesting details to the decoration of the Turkish faience of the period.

PERSIA, JOSHAGHAN GHALI, END XVI CENTURY

16

VASE CARPET

On a ground of wine red a variety of majestic palmettes and conventionalized flowers is arranged in three major and two minor vertical rows. The figures of the three major rows are in each horizontal line identical in construction but the center one in each instance differs in color from the outer two. Half rosettes meet the margin at either side. In the left secondary row two vases on elaborate brackets and with interior ornamentation of arabesques are substituted for rosettes and two half vases appear also in the right marginal row. These figures are rendered in light garnet, saffron, fawn, grass and jade green, turquoise, cerulean and sapphire blue and ivory. A large scale ogival tracery connecting

⁽³³⁾ Cf. Ernst Diez, *Die Elemente der Persische Landschaftmalerei und ihre Gestaltung*, in Kunde, Wesen, Entwicklung, Vienna, 1922, s. 117.

⁽³⁴⁾ Cf. e.g. the miniature of a Garden Scene in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs of Paris illustrated in nearly every work on Persian Miniature Painting.



Vase Carpet

No. 16

these motives is defined by two series of stems, one in ivory and one in blue. The interstices are filled with smaller scale palmettes, leafy vines and tiny blossoms in the same tones and many of the intersections of the stems are marked by tchis of various forms. This design is abruptly changed, across the top of the field, to a pattern of interweaving arabesques.

The dark blue border is covered by an interweaving tracery of arabesques in fawn and ivory carrying at close intervals various styles of lotus flowers and lilies in the same colors as the field ornaments. The outer guard stripe is a reciprocal in cerulean blue and rose. The inner guard stripe of fawn bears a fine flowering vine.⁽³⁵⁾

L. c. 31 ft.
W. c. 11 ft.
Lent by
Mrs. Edith Rockefeller
McCormick.

Although unfortunately few Vase carpets are known they are divided into three or four groups. The earliest have heavy lattice-like leaves dividing the field into rigid and conspicuous compartments like the fragmentary piece in the Ewkaf Museum in Constantinople.⁽³⁶⁾ Those of the second group have adjoining compartments on contrasting ground colors, each containing a flower or flower spray. The best examples of this group are the great carpet in the Schloss Museum in Berlin⁽³⁷⁾ and its pendant in the collection of Mr. Clarence H. Mackay. The third type is marked by massive palmettes and conventionalized flower forms to which every other element in the composition is subordinate. Of this type, this piece and the Ballard fragmentary piece are the only early examples save for a few scattered smaller fragments. It was from this type that the majority of subsequent vase carpets were developed. These subsequent classes, sometimes on a red ground, sometimes white and sometimes blue, are marked by a diminution in the size of the palmettes, the increasing importance of the subsidiary floral ornamentation and the growing naturalism mounting to botanical exactness in the rendition of a remarkable variety of the Spring flowers of Persia.

The history of the origins of these patterns and of their assemblage into such a powerful and decorative design, unique in Persian art, is a long, complicated and interesting story. Many of the patterns seem to have been derived directly from the painters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Others come from early sixteenth century carpets, here isolated and greatly enlarged. But the composition of these elements into such a strikingly new decorative scheme is not yet clearly understood. The important fact is that a type was thereby created which is marked a thing apart from all other carpet designs. It has little of the symmetrical finesse that characterises most carpets but has instead an uncompromising grandeur and force that were never approximated in carpets save only in the severe Dragon carpets.

Of the fifteen or twenty vase carpets known to exist, of which only five are in private possession either here or abroad, this is the largest, it is in the most perfect condition with the possible exception of a piece, known by rumor only, in a German noble family which must from the description be of much later date, and it is at the same time one of the earliest, perhaps the earliest with the possible exception of the sadly damaged piece in the Ewkaf Museum. The later pieces may surpass it in varied poetic charm, in elegance and in the skill of their naturalism, but this maintains its supremacy by virtue of a certain epic and heroic grandeur that places it in the fore rank of all achievements in the decorative arts.

⁽³⁵⁾ Technical details and a full discussion of the carpet in relation both to the history of the design and to other pieces of the type will appear in a monograph with color plates and many supplementary illustrations, to be published shortly by Mrs. McCormick.

⁽³⁶⁾ Illustrated: Meisterwerke Muhammadanische Kunst Tafel 52, and Bode-Kuehnelt, op. cit. abb. 35. (cf. Eng. trans. Riefstahl.)

⁽³⁷⁾ Illustrated in color: Werner Grote Hasenbalg der Orient teppich seine Geschichte und Kultur, frontispiece.



Vase Carpet

No. 17

PERSIA, JOSHAGHAN GHALI, EARLY XVII CENTURY


17

VASE CARPET

The ground of old rose is almost concealed by a dense array of large scale rosettes and palmettes and huge flowers in saffron, light and dark blue, deep green, seal brown and purple garnet. At the top is a pair of tall vases out of which grow flowering trees flanked below on the margins by half peacock tails fancifully rendered. Except for the correspondence of the right and left halves none of the major elements of the design is repeated. Including those on the central axis, more than thirty-five can be counted, a tour de force of ingenuity and imagination. The apparently haphazard and crowded arrangement really follows a fundamental scheme. Two sets of inconspicuous, irregular lattice-like stems, one in blue and one in gold, divide the field into overlapping ogival compartments and at the same time bind together the major motives.

In the border small groups of starry flowers, jasmine, campanula and primulus, alternate with single larger flowers, a conventionalized poppy bud, a full blown poppy and a third flower that is called in Joshaghan today an onion flower. These recur in a complex but systematic arrangement.

Pile, wool; double warp, cotton; weft, cotton and linen, 3 after each row of knots; knot, Persian, square, 16 vertical, 13 horizontal, 208 to the square inch. Fading: light bluish green originally yellower; deep rose terra cotta faded to a lighter tone nearer buff; light saffron turned slightly whitish; light blue, dark blue, garnet, seal brown, deep green and dark red unchanged.

L. 13 ft. 7 in.
w. 6 ft. 2 in.
Lent by 
Bernheimer Brothers.

This carpet marks something of a transition from the earlier carpets, such as the McCormick piece and the fragmentary piece in the Ewka Museum, to the very intricate and more refined later types, such as the blue carpet in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum and the large fragment in the Stieglitz Museum in Leningrad. It has much of the formidable grandeur of the first group and much of the elegance and intricacy of the second. There have gone into the design of this carpet energy of thinking, inventive resource and a sense for magnificence, all in high degree. The piece is in an exceptional state of preservation.

Published, Altorientalische Teppiche, Tafel V.

PERSIA, JOSHAGHAN GHALI, EARLY XVII CENTURY

18

VASE CARPET

On a field of old rose a great variety of palmettes, rosettes and huge conventionalized flowers and three vases on graceful brackets holding branches of fruit blossoms are arranged in four major and three secondary vertical rows. Two series of stems, one in gold and one in blue, running through and connecting the major patterns divide the field into numerous inconspicuous interlacing ogival compartments. The principal colors are deep blue, turquoise and greenish blue, pale gold, fawn, seal brown, purple garnet, emerald and celadon green. Underlying this main design is a fine tracery of delicate tendrils with tiny blossoms. Snail-like tchi forms occur at regular intervals throughout.

In the dark blue border is a succession of various kinds of rosettes and lotus blossoms alternating with sprays of blue plumbago and white jasmine.



Floral Carpet

No. 19

Pile, wool; double warp, cotton, 4-ply; weft, 3 after each row of knots, 2 cotton and 1 linen; knot, Persian, 12 vertical, 15 horizontal, 180 to the square inch.

L. 15 ft.
w. 6 ft.
Lent by
B. Altman & Co.

Although the influence of the court painters and faience makers is beginning to show in some of the elements of this design, nevertheless the carpet remains essentially the product of the weaving art itself, maintaining a rugged individuality and exhibiting its native character as a heavy textile with a satisfying frankness that we sometimes miss when the weaving is too completely dominated by the painters. It confesses an ancient and honorable lineage of textile tradition. There is specific evidence that although woven for the court of the most magnificent of Safavian monarchs the weavers were disdainful of the accuracy of the more meticulous weaving, and it must be admitted that the resultant individual variations do endow the carpet with a decisive personality which perhaps made this type the more agreeable to such a forthright and energetic character as Shah Abbas, for whom this piece was almost certainly made. But, like most significant works of art it contains within itself a double and contrasting character; the force and energy of the great patterns are softened and refined by mellow and harmonious colors, so that for all its power the carpet has gentleness and reserve.

Published, Heinrich Jacoby, Eine Sammlung Orientalischer Teppiche, S. 17, Tafel 1.

PERSIA, JOSHAGHAN GHALI, EARLY XVII CENTURY FLORAL CARPET

19

On a field of quiet old rose a rich assortment of decorative but naturalistic flower sprays: campanula, narcissus poeticus, iris, willow shrub, rose, calendula, carnation, aster, lily and fruit blossoms, in fawn, rose, light and dark green, light violet, gold and ivory, is ranged about a small but vigorous center eight-pointed star medallion of gold ornamented with energetic interlacing arabesques in green and numerous small tchi forms in violet, characteristic of this type. In the corners are quadrants of the same medallion.

The border is green blue with rosettes, blossoms and leaves in red and gold and a few tchi forms.

Pile, wool; warp double, cotton; weft, linen, 3 after each row of knots; knot Persian, 16 vertical, 17 horizontal, 272 to the square inch.

L. 6 ft. 9 in.
w. 4 ft. 8 in.
Lent by
Kelekian.

Although the vases and huge palmettes are missing, this carpet is a worthy member of the great group of vase carpets. The flower patterns are identical with the flowers of many of the larger pieces as well as of well known fragments and the scattered *tchi* forms are a characteristic mark of these weavings. To have attempted in such small compass the huge flower forms would have betrayed a lack of taste and understanding. But for all its small dimensions, and it is the only small rug of the kind known, it has maintained the virility and clarity of the best of the type and to this have been added a freshness and charm of color that bring a joyous quality into the style somewhat lacking in the solemn early carpets and most appropriate to the smaller and more intimate size.



Vase Carpet

No. 20

PERSIA, JOSHAGHAN GHALI, FIRST THIRD XVII CENTURY

20

VASE CARPET

The deep, greenish blue ground is resplendently decorated with palmettes, rosettes, lotus flowers and vases set on a double order of stems in gold and pale green that outline irregular ogival lattices, alternating with sprays of fruit blossoms and masses of flowers, including thistles, Persian roses, asters, coreopsis, evening primroses, poppies, primulus, iris and one willow tree all in pale red, rose, fawn, saffron and a great variety of blues ranging from green and turquoise to a deep cerulean. There are numerous small tchi forms.

In the border, on a ground of mellow glowing gold, a composite flower of lily-like contour alternates with a stellate rosette and a grape leaf palmette with graceful naturalistic vines and leaves intertwining.

Pile, wool; double warp, 4-ply cotton; weft, 3 after each row of knots, one 2-ply cotton and 2 silk; knot, Persian, 15 vertical, 16 horizontal, 240 to the square inch.

L. 11 ft. 11 in.
w. 5 ft. 10 in.
Lent by
B. Altman & Co.

Although this carpet is incomplete it must nevertheless rank as one of the finest of the Vase carpets known. It still preserves something of the dignity and scale of the earlier pieces now refined and enriched without becoming lost in the intricate maze that so delighted the later designers. Such accuracy and delicacy of contour, such consistency of perfect drawing, such firmness and restraint are scarcely found in any carpet. The growing influence of the painters with their increasingly naturalistic and pictorial effects is clearly shown here. Without losing the decorative character the patterns have acquired botanical accuracy. The entire pattern is arranged with a freedom of invention and sophisticated asymmetries which, despite their boldness, are perfectly harmonized and controlled by the major plan, here unfortunately fractured by a missing section. This freedom, if attempted by a designer less wise and experienced, would certainly have yielded confusion but here we have rather a deeply satisfying richness and a quiet peace.

The willow shrub for several generations common in miniature painting was especially beloved by Riza Abbasi, and its presence in the carpet may reflect his popularity at the court if not his actual handiwork.

Published, Heinrich Jacoby, Eine Sammlung Orientalischer Teppiche, S. 21; Tafel 2.

PERSIA, JOSHAGHAN GHALI, EARLY XVII CENTURY

21

FRAGMENT OF ARABESQUE CARPET

On a ground of clear, intense blue two sets of interweaving arabesques are rendered in gold and red with touches of pale green, salmon and a purple garnet against a secondary pattern of mille fleurs. In the border are two orders of paired arabesques in colors corresponding to the arabesques of the field.

Pile, wool; warp, double, fine, evenly spun cotton, 4-ply; weft, 3 after every row of knots, 2 of linen, 1 very fine silk; knot, Persian, 16 vertical, 17 horizontal, 272 to the square inch.

L. 4 ft.
w. 3 ft. 5 in.
Lent by
Bernheimer Brothers.

This is obviously a fragment of one of the greatest carpets ever woven. The material of its structure shows that it was an exceptional effort for a great person and the



Fragment of Arabesque Carpet No. 21

supreme beauty of the pattern and color also makes this immediately clear. The swirling conflicts between the two orders of arabesques against the background of flowers, delicate and sparkling but aloof, reach a pitch of dramatic vividness worthy of the best in music or literature. Abstract pattern has been here endowed with an intensity and elevation of feeling that an uninspired imagination could not have foreseen.

PERSIA, JOSHAGHAN GHALI, EARLY XVII CENTURY

22

FRAGMENT OF VASE CARPET

This fragment is one of the few samples of carpet weaving that we can prove came directly from one of the palaces of the Safavian Shahs. It was found in 1880 in Chehel Seitun (Palace of the Forty Columns), an exquisite structure built by Shah Abbas at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

In 1880 the Governor General of Isfahan, H. I. H. the Zillies-Sultan, undertook repairs and alterations on the building. In the course of the work it was discovered that two very uneven floors really consisted of earth and plaster to a depth of six inches. When this debris was removed several carpets were revealed. As sections came to light they were hacked off by workmen and sold for a few tomans each. This particular piece was at the time presented by the Governor General himself to Mrs. Joseph Elias, then living in Isfahan.⁽³⁸⁾

Lent by
B. W. Stainton.

The explanation, universally accepted at the time for this odd burial of carpets, was that when the Afghans attacked and captured Isfahan early in the eighteenth century, the carpets were safely concealed by this practical method, the only one feasible under the circumstances when we take into consideration the huge bulk of these carpets and the lack of ready hiding places for such ponderous property. It is probable that those who buried the carpets were killed in the massacre that followed, so that the whole matter was forgotten.

It is worth noting that only carpets of the Vase style were thus found buried.

PERSIA, KURDESTAN, DATED 1794

23

COPY OF A CARPET IN VASE CARPET STYLE

A ground of midnight blue is closely covered with a powerful and exciting pattern of interlacing arabesques in sharply contrasted red and ivory. These are crossed by three vertical rows of grapeleaf palmettes, the middle in white the two side rows in emerald and olive green. The various spaces created by the arabesques are filled with a great variety of the spring flowers of Persia, such as poppies, iris, narcissus poeticus, carnations, roses and fruit blossoms and willow shrubs, done in red, ivory, fawn, several shades of green, several shades of blue and pale garnet. Small tchi forms exactly like those in early Vase carpets, as for example, the small floral piece of the Vase carpet type No. 19, are scattered thickly throughout the field.

⁽³⁸⁾ This information was supplied by Mr. B. W. Stainton who was in Isfahan at the time.



Arabesque and Floral Carpet

No. 23

In a small ivory cartouche at the top of the carpet is the signature of the weaver:

"Made by Gerous Ali Riza Khan 1209 A. H." (1794 A. D.)

The border consists of two very narrow floral guard stripes.

Pile, wool; warp, 4 ply silk; weft, 2 ply linen (?), 2 after each row of knots; knot Persian, 19 vertical, 21 horizontal, 400 to the square inch; overcast on 8 cords; red end selvage with wool inserted stripe. No evidence of color changes.

L. 14 ft. 3 ins.
W. 4 ft. 6 ins.
Lent by
Costikyan & Co.

This carpet is important far beyond its years. Thanks to its absolutely perfect state of preservation, it has apparently never had the slightest use, and thanks also to the extraordinary accuracy and spirit with which the Kurdish weaver reproduced an early Vase carpet, we can see almost exactly how the great Vase carpets of the classical period looked when fresh from the looms.

All of the elements of the later Vase carpets, after the designers had given up the huge palmettes and flower forms, are here in drawing, the brilliance and exactness of which falls only a shade short of that of the great weavers. The deficiency, though slight, is interesting and can be seen by a careful comparison of the arabesques with those in the blue fragment (No. 21). The weaver of this carpet reproduced not only the given design and the bold spirit and rich color of his model but also minute details. Such fine points as the fringe on the tiny comet-like *tchis* are indistinguishable from those in the early carpets.

The tiny guard stripes and the red selvage with the wool insert indicate clearly that the carpet was woven in Persian Kurdistan, probably in or near Bijar. The name Gerous in the signature probably refers to the little town of Gerous, northeast of Bijar, where rugs similar to this have been woven down to within a few years. A quite similar piece, although much later in character, also from Gerous, dated 1268 A. H. (1851), is in the Royal Palace at Teheran. The Kurds are the master copyists of the entire Orient. They can reproduce anything with a startling fidelity that other weavers never approach. In all respects even to the technique of the knot, the piece is identical with its model.

The reason for such a creation is really not far to seek. It is probable that some Kurdish chief or noble had, sometime a hundred or two hundred years before, received as a present from the great Shah Abbas himself or one of his immediate successors, a Vase carpet, and that, as the original began to suffer from wear, his heirs had this copy made to preserve and renew their treasure of great price.

More important than such considerations is the dashing and brilliant beauty of the carpet. Because of the superb color, made possible by the fine quality of the wool and the skill of the dyeing, because of the fine knotting which gives a compact pile with the possibility of vivid contours, because of the clarity and sumptuousness of the pattern and the almost reckless boldness with which they are assembled and, finally, because of the perfect freshness of the whole weaving, we have in this piece one of the finest examples of the carpet maker's art, quite worthy to take its place with the old masters about it.

PERSIA, JOSHAGHAN OR KURDESTAN, ABOUT 1800 ARABESQUE CARPET

24

Interweaving arabesques in red and ivory divide the dark blue field into irregular compartments in which are various spring flowers and two willow shrubs. Some of the intersections of the arabesques are marked by palmettes.



So-Called Polonaise Carpet

No. 25

The border is ornamented with oval flower medallions flanked by angular lancet leaves with small blooms in the intertices. Both guard stripes bear running vines with small flowers.

L. 12 ft. 2 in.
w. 6 ft. 8 in.
Lent by
Vincent Robinson.

This carpet, one of a pair, again illustrates how persistently Vase carpet patterns survived in Western Persia. The basis of the design which is only a broader rendition of the preceding number is to be found in the top panel of the McCormick carpet (No. 16). It is only one of innumerable variations of this pattern, the most fundamental and remarkable in the whole repertoire of Near Eastern designs. Centuries of experiment and literally thousands of combinations with this simple form never seem to have exhausted its possibilities. It can enter as many permutations as if it were a digit and in its different phases has more varied and expressive content than almost any single word. The arabesque as an element in design practically vanished from most Persian arts a hundred years ago. Its peculiar quality, it has to be thought about to be seen, could not survive in the dullness and indifference that came in with the general Persian decline in the nineteenth century.

Although this carpet has come a long way from its original forbears, it has merit: vigor, clarity, richness and a sound decorative sense. Its excellence comes from the fact that it looked only to indigenous standards and asked and conceded nothing to the European taste that was just beginning to make itself felt through the medium of traveling merchants about the time the carpet was woven.

Excellent examples that show the transition from the old Vase carpets to these more modern reproductions will be found in Martin.⁽³⁹⁾

SILK CARPET FROM ISPAHAN COURT LOOMS

SO-CALLED POLONAISE CARPETS

IN THE Paris Exposition of 1878, a large group of silk and gold carpets from the Czar-toriski collection of Warsaw was exhibited under the caption "Tapis Polonaise" and for thirty years the name persisted. It was thought that they were done by a certain Pole named Mersherski who, on his return from the Orient in the middle of the eighteenth century, established looms for silk and gold weaving in Poland. This theory was long ago exploded by Dr. Bode and Dr. Martin. The presence of carpets in the Royal Residence at Munich and one in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum with Persian inscriptions proves Persian origin, which was also really sufficiently indicated by the character of the design.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Although somewhat different from contemporary Persian carpets, it is truly Persian in character. Perhaps the florid and excessively rich quality of the patterns reflects something of the influence of the Italian Renaissance which was felt at the Court of Shah Abbas, who was so cordial to European styles that he did not hesitate to employ an Italian architect named Grimaldi for important work. Further details and proof of Persian origin and evidence that they are related to the Vase Carpets woven in Joshaghan Gahli came to light this year in Persia.⁽⁴¹⁾

The fact that a great number of these carpets had been found in the possession of old European families and courts would indicate that they were woven primarily for the purpose of presentation to European monarchs and ambassadors, and this may

⁽³⁹⁾ Cf. e.g. Martin op. cit. Fig. 195.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ For the fullest discussion in English of these carpets with a summary of Mersherski's contract, see Arthur Upham Pope, *Oriental Rugs as Fine Art*, *Polonaise Carpets*, *International Studio*, March, 1923.

⁽⁴¹⁾ This also will be discussed in the article in the *College Art Bulletin* on the carpets at Kum.



So-Called Polonaise Carpet

No. 26

also account for the character of the patterns, so obviously planned to be overwhelming in their luxury and elegance.⁽⁴²⁾

Approximately four hundred of the Polonaise carpets in pile weaving are known, but only about a dozen pieces woven in the tapestry or khilim stitch are in existence. It has always been assumed, but never proved, that the tapestry pieces were from the same atelier as the others. The designs are quite different, more elegant and reserved than luxurious, with ample spacing and the sharp drawing made possible by the technique. The gold and silver, however, are nearly always inserted in the same manner. It is also a well-established fact that all the khilim carpets differ markedly from those woven in pile by the same people. A different pattern for each type of weaving has apparently always been the rule, and a sound rule it is. Until we get evidence to the contrary, therefore, the assumption that both the Polonaise types have a common origin is reasonable as well as convenient.

PERSIA, ISPAHAN COURT LOOMS, EARLY XVII CENTURY
SO-CALLED POLONAISE CARPET

25

The background of deep seal brown is almost covered by a series of rich arabesques and lancet leaves on strong stems whose sweeping curves define various compartments. The design is dominated by a delicately cusped center medallion of deep blue with four palmettes and four arabesques in topaz, celadon, fawn and Nattier blue, flanked by four round palmettes with reciprocal inset margins of a type specially common in Vase carpets.

The border contains pairs of arabesques set on dark blue irregularly undulating stems define various compartments in light emerald, golden salmon and fawn. The large compartments contain palmettes, each partly surrounded by a broad simple cloud band.

L. 13 ft. 7 in.
W. 5 ft. 10 in.
Lent by
Duveen Brothers.

Pile, silk and silver; warp, cotton; weft, linen and vari-colored silk, 3 after each row of knots; knot Persian, 14 vertical, 17 horizontal, 238 to the square inch.

The reputation of Polonaise carpets among the judicious was long ago compromised by the poor and shabby pieces. Of inflated and confused designs, all but obliterated by wear, with pretensions far beyond their merit, they did no credit to the art of rug weaving. There have been other pieces too small for the scale of their patterns. As Aristotle insisted, proper magnitude is an essential element in aesthetic effects, and meagre size is particularly unpleasant when opulence and the imperial manner are intended. With a size adequate to the grandiose patterns, and a design clearly thought out, the Polonaise carpet, as in the present instance, may become a thing of thrilling beauty. The enchanting, fairy-like colors, often of more than twenty high keyed tones, the cool glint of the silver or gold surfaces, the radiant sheen of the silk combine to create a vision of exciting loveliness that must have quite dazzled contemporary Europeans, and that was one of the purposes for which they were woven.

PERSIA, ISPAHAN COURT LOOMS, EARLY XVII CENTURY
SO-CALLED POLONAISE CARPET

26

The design is constructed around a central star medallion in gold with four finely drawn lotus. Large complex arabesques on broad curving stems define various compartments

⁽⁴²⁾ Important discussions of these carpets will be found in Martin, Op. Cit. p. 62 et seq. and in Bode-Kuehnelt Op. Cit. p. 26 et seq.



So-Called Polonaise Tapestry Carpet

of which two in dark seal brown serve as medallion pendants. The compartments adjoining the medallion are in silver, the others in gold. All the compartments are similarly decorated with lotus blossoms and palmettes on dark spiral vines with delicate buds, flowers and lancet leaves.

The border is a powerful reciprocal, alternating silver and salmon.

In addition to the silver and gold, of which considerable areas have survived, the principal colors, not counting numerous intermediate tones, are deep seal brown, pale taupe, brilliant Nattier blue, turquoise, a light silvery blue, deep blue green, emerald, pale green, topaz, ivory, rose and salmon.

Pile silk, remnants of gold and silver; warp double, cotton, 5 strands; weft dull fawn or copper-colored silk, 4 strands; 3 after each row of knots; knot Persian, 13 vertical, 16 horizontal, 208 to the square inch.

L. 6 ft. 11 ins.
w. 4 ft. 8 ins.
Lent by
Parish Watson.

The rationality and clear organization of the design, marks of relatively early date, do not militate against a regal sumptuousness which is attained primarily by the high keyed colors, so fresh and pure; by the exceeding beauty of the lotus and larger flowers forms, almost worthy of the Sixteenth Century; by the richness of the arabesques which still preserve their character as arabesques, often lost through excessive elaboration in later pieces; and finally by the powerful dominant note of velvety brown. This resonant masculine tone, echoed in spirit by the rugged border, and sustained by crisp outlines and decisive accents, saves the carpet from any hint of weakness and endows it with the precious vitality that comes only from genuine contrasts, mediated and resolved.

From the collection of Prince Lichtenstein.

Published: *Altorientalische Teppiche*, Vienna, No. 5, Color Plate No. IV.

PERSIA, ISFAHAN COURT LOOMS, SECOND QUARTER XVII CENTURY SO-CALLED POLONAISE TAPESTRY CARPET

27

On a field of pale gold a medallion in cerulean blue encloses a dragon and phoenix fighting flanked by a fox and a spotted deer inverted. The bar pendants are ivory with pairs of confronted ducks, the Chinese symbol for conjugal happiness. The corner quadrants, also blue, carry ferocious rampant lions in orange with flaming shoulders. The field is covered with rich but simple lotus flowers and varied foliage with several graceful pheasants, rendered in rose, scarlet, orange, salmon, leaf green, pale green, deep blue, medium blue, light turquoise, ivory and a curious but very successful taupe.

In the border elongated cartouches in blue containing lions or tigers alternate with quatrefoil rosaces in gold containing varied lion masks. The background is silver.

Warp, fine yellow silk, 28-29 to the inch; weft, silk with silver inserted.

L. 8 ft. 7 in.
w. 4 ft. 4 in.
Lent by
Bernheimer Brothers.

This piece and its two companion pieces (Cf. No. 28) are closely related to the set of tapestry carpets, which were exhibited in Munich in 1910⁽⁴³⁾, which bear the arms of Anna Katherina Konstanze and were, as we know from the records in the Residenz Museum in Munich, presented to her in 1642 as a marriage gift. Some of

⁽⁴³⁾ Cf. *Meisterwerke Muhammadanischen Kunst*, Tafel 60.



So-Called Polonaise Tapestry Carpet

No. 28

the pieces were obviously made to order for this occasion. For this reason we are not justified in putting a much earlier date on any of the tapestry Polonaise. Nonetheless they have a distinct relation to earlier design. They show the same simplicity and energy of pattern as earlier pieces, the same liberality of spacing and the same delicacy of stem drawing, here turned in even curves in an exquisite and perfect tracery. The lions are in the style of those of the early sixteenth century that might possibly have been designed by Ghiyas-ed-Din, as the one signed carpet and one signed brocade might indicate.⁽⁴⁴⁾

The piece is a shade finer in weaving than most of the others of its class and the colors are fresher, more varied and more delicate. It is interesting to note that it is the pendant to the piece in the Kaiser Friederich Museum which bears the inscription *Padisha*, indicating that it was the work of the Royal Persian looms.⁽⁴⁵⁾ The differences are slight and unessential.

PERSIA, ISFAHAN COURT LOOMS, FIRST HALF XVII CENTURY
SO-CALLED POLONAISE TAPESTRY CARPET

28

On a field of pale gold, an ogival medallion outlined in pale red is filled with seven flying cranes and small amorphous Tchi forms. They are rendered in turquoise, salmon, pale green, rose and black. The pendent bar is in Nattier blue with confronting ducks in salmon and silvery blue, while the pendant escutcheon carries confronting geese in blue, citron, gold and black. The corners are in Nattier blue with excitingly drawn flying cranes in light tones.

The field is charmingly decorated with animals and foliage simply and flatly drawn and beautifully colored in a great variety of delicate shades: rabbits in salmon and black; deer in blue, white spotted or deep gold, with blue and salmon spots or even red and green; lions in red or blue; dragons in salmon and citron; leopards in white, ibex in black and lynx in citron complete this gay rainbow menagerie, which is dramatically accentuated by the black stems of the trees.

The border consists of long gold cartouches and smaller rounded ones in gold, blue and citron repeating the animals of the field. The guard stripes are predominantly red and blue for the inner, and pale green for the outer.

Warp, silk; weft, silk encircled with gold and silver; 28 warps to the inch.

l. 7 ft. 2 in.
w. 4 ft. 11 in.
Lent by
P. W. French & Co

This fairy-like creation creates a number of problems, for it seems to be the work of another loom or at least another cartoon maker than most of the others in the class. Compare, for example, the assured and forceful drawing of the Tchi forms in the border of the Stora piece (No. 29) with the tentative childlike quality of those in the medallion of this piece. For contemporary rugs woven in the same technique and materials and presumably for the same patrons the differences are striking and too considerable to have had a strictly common origin. But just what determined such contrasting types we can hardly even guess. The extravagant beauty of this piece quenches the ardor for discovery and it is most agreeable to forget unsolved puzzles and to revel instead in a playful, gentle, poetic quality that has hardly been matched in the history of weaving.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Cf. F. R; Martin, *Figurale Persische Stoffe*, Fig. 17.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Bode-Kuehnelt op. cit., abb. 48.



Dragon Carpet

No. 30

PERSIA, ISFAHAN COURT LOOMS, FIRST THIRD XVII CENTURY
SO-CALLED POLONAISE TAPESTRY CARPET

29

The field is pure glistening gold dominated by a magnificent central quatrefoil medallion. Two lobes are in silver with bold lotus flowers in gold and red, two in rose fawn with blue palmettes. The deep blue areas dividing and surrounding the lobes consist of four diagonally placed arabesque silhouettes with varied colored vine and blossom ornamentation. A broad red arabesque divides the corner segments into two sections, one carrying a gold green and blue lotus on a turquoise ground, the other a superbly drawn palmette in salmon, gold and sapphire on silver.

The bar pendants are in deep rose and the escutcheon in silver with a blue and fawn lotus. The side half bars and pendants are in emerald, salmon, scarlet and turquoise.

The field is covered with a vigorously drawn, well spaced arrangement of leaves and blossoms in emerald, olive, rose, scarlet, salmon, fawn, sapphire, turquoise and silver. In the upper field a pair of scarlet outlined silver rosettes encloses a spiral lotus in salmon and blue, while the corresponding designs in the lower field show a rose leopard felling a black and white deer, balancing a white leopard and rose and turquoise deer.

The deep sapphire border carries a succession of long cartouches all on a gold ground, alternating with the star cartouche on grounds of gold and salmon. The decoration consists of lotus blossoms and a conventional figure composed of arabesques in various tones of scarlet, rose, turquoise, salmon. Outer guard stripe undulating vine and leaves on gold, the inner a similar pattern on silver.

Warp silk; 26-27 to the inch; weft silk, gold and silver.

Lent by
M. & R. Stora

There are less than a dozen of these exquisite tapestry Polonaise carpets known and this piece has its equal only in the exceedingly gorgeous fragment in the Royal Residence in Munich.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Only the Munich fragment contains as much silver and gold as actually loads this piece. Yet the method of tying the tiny flat ribbons of the silver and gold around a thin silk core of the same color saves the carpet from becoming garish or metallic. There is enough to proclaim opulence, not enough to verge on vulgarity.

Although woven well into the seventeenth century, like its companion pieces it harks back to earlier models. The undimmed freshness of the colors, so frankly exuberant, is a perfect expression of the self-confident glory of the reign of the great Shah Abbas whose robust aesthetic ideals might well serve to vitalize our somewhat anemic taste.

From the Dragonetti Collection. Published: Arthur Upham Pope, International Studio, April 1923.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Cf. Meisterwercke Muhammadanischen Kunst, Tafel 61.



Dragon Carpet

No. 31

The air of grandeur which pervades this carpet is due primarily to the great size of the main patterns with their intricate but firm delineations and to the beautiful mellowness and balance of the strong simple colors. A certain ponderous quality common in the large Oushaks is here relieved by the exceeding animation of the vine and leaf pattern encircling the great medallion. Its challenging vigor is due primarily to an extreme simplification which, while keeping contact with its original naturalistic inspiration, has discarded everything superfluous. The sharp serrations and abrupt fragmentations here count with especial force because of the contrast between the golden yellow figure and the midnight blue ground.



Cushak Carpet

No. 44 ~~No. 43~~

II

CARPETS FROM THE EASTERN CAUCASUS

30

EASTERN CAUCASUS, KUBA REGION, END XVI CENTURY

DRAGON CARPET

30

A field of clear old rose is divided into compartments by two sets of broad serrated leaves, which form a diagonal lattice, in ivory and deep emerald. At the intersections and in many compartments are huge, heraldic-looking palmettes with jagged and hooked silhouettes, and complicated star rosaces. In the compartment flanking the medial line are highly conventionalized dragons, khilins and phoenix fighting, and other scarcely recognizable animal forms. The serrated bands that divide the field are decorated with ducks, phoenix and heavy blossoms on thick stems. The principal colors of the subordinate ornamentation, symmetrically distributed, beautifully harmonized, but everywhere in bold contrasts, are deep, medium and pale blue, golden buff, rose, green and a deep plum color, in places verging toward lilac.

The border is decorated with pairs of erect arabesques supporting a conventionalized flower, sharply and vigorously drawn, in rose, gold, blue and violet on ivory.

Pile, wool; warp, grayish wool; weft, wool dyed brownish red, 32 after each row of knots; knot Turkish, 9 vertical, 8½ horizontal, 76 to the square inch. End border restored.

L. 17 ft.
w. 8 ft.
Lent by
B. Altman & Co.

Of the old Dragon Carpets on a rose ground with the conventionalized animals perhaps forty or fifty are known, of which only three or four can be held to rival this now-famous carpet. Every element that confers greatness upon the type is to be found in this piece in high measure. Such austerity, such seizing power, such robust yet harmonious color, such forceful silhouettes are hardly to be found in any known textile. When compared with a piece of such poetic elegance and infinite refinement as the Kelekian fragment (No. 10), the contrast is startling and dramatically eloquent of the emotional range which lies within the compass of the art of rug weaving.

The sources of the impressive power of this piece, which can escape no one, are to be found in a great variety of devices, concerning which we may theorize but which the artists who created the patterns executed with unerring primitive directness. It is almost as if the vast grandeur and savage contours of the Caucasus Mountains were transmuted directly into the design, distilled and concentrated by virile and objective minds. We who come after can but observe and describe. To cite only a few of these devices: The diagonal leaf bands with their uncompromising collisions have jagged sawtooth edges which do not correspond; the heraldic palmettes are cut in a sharp and cruel contour that suggests metal; the interiors of some of them, carrying lotus, are as massive as if built up of stone slabs, and the animal forms are composed of a startling array of strong and curious patterns with harsh and sudden protuberances. All the patterns display a violent and ingenious unexpectedness, not the normal product of a



Dragon Carpet

No. 32

tame or civilized fancy, but rather the immediate utterance from some powerful, objective foreign world.

Exhibited Exposition Muhammadan Art, Munich, 1910. No. 92. Published and illustrated: Meisterwerke Muhammadanischen Kunst, Tafel 65; Heinrich Jacoby, Eine Sammlung Orientalischer Teppiche, s. 39 Tafel 9. Cited: Arthur Upham Pope, Jahrbuch Asiatischer Kunst 1925, s. 163.

EASTERN CAUCASUS, KUBA REGION, XVII CENTURY

DRAGON CARPET

The usual dragon carpet design in somewhat more vigorous form and with an unusually large number of animals, most of which are unrecognizable except to those who have followed the history of these patterns, is rendered in deep rose, deep blue, cerulean blue, greenish blue changing to turquoise, citron yellow, light brown or fawn, black and glowing purple, fading to lilac.

Pile wool; warp, coarse 2-ply white wool, concealed, alternate threads deeply depressed; weft, dyed reddish wool, 2-ply, 2 after every row of knots; knot, Turkish; vertical, 9½; horizontal, 8; 76 to the square inch. Fading: Lemon yellow in places to whitish; dark brown irregularly, sometimes toward yellow; light brown in some places faded to lighter, in others not at all; green in places faded to bluish; purple violet irregularly whitened in some places, in others unfaded; medium blue, dark blue, red and emerald green not faded at all. The thickness of the pile makes it possible to determine degrees of fading with unusual accuracy.

L. 9 ft. 4 in.
W. 4 ft. 4 in.
Lent by
Bernheimer Brothers.

This carpet is important not merely because of its conspicuous beauty and striking force, surpassed by no carpet of its class with the possible exception of the Lamm fragment, now in the collection of George Hewitt Myers, but even more because it is the best preserved piece of the type that has been found, and thus shows as no other piece does, approximately what the finest of these carpets looked like in their pristine condition. The colors are of superlative quality, the pile so deep and lustrous that it seems like an animal's pelt.

EASTERN CAUCASUS, KUBA REGION, MIDDLE XVII CENTURY

DRAGON CARPET

The pattern closely follows that of all of the accompanying Dragon Carpets with the principal exception that the serrations and contours have now been simplified and softened. Similarly the colors, which include almost the full scale of the earlier pieces, are now richer and quieter, and the field of glowing rose has now given way to a field of lustrous blue.

Pile wool; warp, plain white wool; weft, wool dyed brownish red, 2 after each row of knots; knot, Turkish.

L. 12 ft. 8 in.
W. 6 ft. 6 in.
Lent by
Bachstitz.

This is the only Dragon Carpet that has yet come to light which is on a field of blue, although a number of pieces contain a good deal of the color. The taming of the savage contours that mark the earlier pieces and the turning from the usual red field to the softer blue, reflect directly changes in taste that were taking place at the Persian court. The early Vase carpets were also on a deep rose ground, but by the end of the



Caucasus Carpet

No. 33

Shah Abbas period (c. 1627) they, too, in response to the increasing refinement of the court, turned to the quieter blue. By the third quarter of the seventeenth century we find such a set of Vase carpets as the superlatively elegant creations of the Mosque of Kum in dominant tones of blue, and while rose Kubas did persist down into the eighteenth century, by the end of the seventeenth it is the blue type that predominates.

Another interesting parallel in the evolution of the two styles is found in the gradual disappearance of the powerfully serrated leaf patterns that mark the field divisions. These patterns are still used in the carpets, but they now have a broad and placid quality, as contrasted with the more exciting character of those of earlier times.

Cited: Arthur Upham Pope, *The Myth of the Dragon Carpets*, *Jahrbuch Asiatischer Kunst*, 1925, p. 157.

EASTERN CAUCASUS, KUBA REGION, XVII CENTURY CARPET WITH CONCENTRIC BANDS

33

The design consists of a succession of stepped bands in gold, brown, red and green surrounding a central medallion. This medallion and the corners are white. The bands are decorated with various highly conventionalized blossoms and stems in similar tones, and the corners with huge bent cypress and highly conventionalized animals, the most prominent of which is a huge spotted deer.

Pile wool; warp, coarse white wool; weft, reddish wool, 2 after every row of knots; knot, Turkish.

L. 11 ft. 8 in.
w. 6 ft. 9 in.
Lent by
DeMotte.

This rare and early carpet is almost the mate to a piece in the Metropolitan Museum, which has been thought to be unique. It belongs to the famous group of the so-called Dragon carpets that have recently been shown to have been woven in the Caucasus, which on account of their monumental grandeur and superb severity of design have so greatly attracted the admiration of art scholars. The same general design scheme appears in a certain coarse and rather unattractive type of carpet called Portuguese, which is supposed to have been made in Goa, in India, of which the best examples are in the Schloss Museum in Berlin and the Vienna Museum of Kunst und Industrie. The idea probably originated in Eastern Persia, as it appears with a good deal of elegance and discretion in a few seventeenth century carpets that seem to have been woven in Khorassan, of which the most famous piece is in the Musée de Tissus at Lyons.

To those who love only finesse and symmetry, who insist on a sweet elegance, this carpet has no message; but those who take relish in significant ugliness or in what Bosanquet better calls "difficult beauty" will find in it a satisfying tonic, the eastern counterpart of much Romanesque and early Gothic taste.

EASTERN CAUCASUS, KUBA REGION, SECOND HALF XVII CENTURY COPY OF A VASE CARPET

34

On a field of mat blue is a primary order of three pairs of huge palmettes half surrounded by gigantic lancet leaves, the middle pair in red, ivory and blue, the end pairs predominantly in yellow, blue and white. A secondary order of palmettes, rosettes and large lotus flowers in similar tones is arranged on a half concealed lattice framework of straight stems.



Caucasus Carpet

No. 35

In the border are red stars, blue lotus and smaller flowers and leaves on an ivory ground. The geometrically patterned guard stripes are in blue and red on yellow.

Pile, wool; warp, white wool; weft, wool dyed reddish, 3 after each row of knots; knot, Turkish, 9 vertical, 8 horizontal, 72 to the square inch.

L. 17 ft. 7 in.
w. 7 ft. 7 in.
Lent by
B. Altman & Co.

This carpet is the Caucasus edition of the Persian vase carpet. The Caucasus weavers, already well disposed to the large scale patterns by their own styles, were naturally tempted to reproduce in their technique the famous vase carpets of the court of the great Shah Abbas. While they could not for a moment rival the elegance or brilliance of drawing, and while the colors are less refined and discreet, none the less they have in this carpet caught a good deal of the grandeur and sumptuousness of their models.

Published and illustrated: Jacoby, Eine Sammlung Orientalischer Teppiche, s. 59, Tafel 13

EASTERN CAUCASUS, KUBA REGION, END XVII OR EARLY XVIII CENTURY

35

CARPET WITH PALMETTES

On a field of lustrous rose a double row of huge palmettes is disposed between three vertical rows of geometrical lotus flowers on straight stems. The largest of these palmettes, which has elaborate interior ornamentation of a lotus flower and buds, is flanked by large lancet leaves, and the remaining interstitial spaces are filled with smaller lotus flowers, rosettes and various geometrical blossoms and leaves on angular stems. The narrow border is decorated by an alternating lily and rosette, severely conventionalized.

Pile wool; warp, white wool, weft, reddish wool, 2 after each row of knots; knot, Turkish, 80 to the square inch.

L. 11 ft. 2 in.
w. 6 ft. 2 in.
Lent by
E. Beghian.

Some of the later carpets of the Kuba region preserve in smaller form something of the ponderous and grandiose effects of the earlier pieces, but they often lack something of the ferocious energy of contour, the almost savage serrations which gave the earlier pieces their tremendous force. Yet these later forms are still lordly and imposing, particularly when, as rarely occurs, a piece is found in such excellent condition, made of first class materials, and of color still fresh and keen. A somewhat similar carpet in the collection of the Austrian state, was published in Martin ⁽⁴⁷⁾ and in the old Vienna book ⁽⁴⁸⁾, and will appear also in the new edition.

EASTERN CAUCASUS, KUBA REGION, LATE XVII CENTURY

36

CARPET WITH PALMETTES

On a ground of deep blue, glowing palmette-shaped escutcheons with simple interior ornamentation of highly conventionalized leaf forms in deep fawn, dark blue, old rose and pale green, are set in four vertical rows. The palmettes, which resemble stately banners, are flanked by stiff cypress trees with blown-over tops.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Martin op. cit. Fig. 304.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Vienna Book op. cit. Pl. XXII.



Caucasus Carpet

No. 36

The border of deep fawn is decorated with undulating vines, with a large curling leaf, which is derived from a leaf form in the Persian Vase carpets.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The minor borders have delicate detached rosettes characteristic of the Caucasus.

Pile, wool; warp, silk; weft, silk; 200 knots to the square inch.

L. 10 ft 3 in.
w. 5 ft. 11 in.
Lent by
E. Beghian.

This solemn and impressive carpet belongs to a small but famous group, of which only a few examples are today extant. Two are in the Metropolitan Museum, one in the collection of Mr. George Hewitt Myers of Washington, one is owned by Mr. V. R. Cliff of Detroit, and there is one in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs of Paris. They were for a long time thought to have been woven in Asia Minor, because the main pattern is very similar to a pattern rather common in the seventeenth century Turkish velvets, the piece in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs being obviously a copy of one of these velvets. But the character of the weaving of most of the pieces, the little detached geometrical and animal figures in the field and the style of the border, which is sometimes found on Kuba carpets, point conclusively to the region of the Eastern Caucasus.

Despite its relatively small size, the rug gives the impression of great dignity and importance. The ample forms so simply rendered and broadly spaced create a feeling of quiet and solemnity that we rarely get in the more nervous and poetic Persian carpets. The provincial courts of the Caucasus did not usually exhibit as cosmopolitan a taste as is found in this carpet, derived from a combination of Turkish and Persian models, but there were courts, especially in Shemaka and Baku, that were aware of the standards of luxury of the courts in the great capitals. The fineness of the weaving and the construction are unprecedented in Caucasus work.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Cf. Border of No. 20.





Turkish Court Carpet

No. 37

III

CARPETS FROM WESTERN ASIA MINOR

29

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, PROBABLY BROUSSA, END XVI CENTURY
TURKISH COURT CARPET

37

In the center is a round medallion of dark blue with touches of rose and green, ornamented with a circlet of tulips and carnations and with a double wave-like pattern floating across the flowers; in the corners quadrants of the same design. The field is covered with interlocking groups of rosettes, tiny Michaelmas daisies and feathery lancet leaves drawn with extraordinary elegance and precision. They are deftly illuminated with white, a fine cotton which preserves a crisp and dainty color being used instead of wool. In the border, palm-ettes alternate with cloud bands with subordinate ornamentation of delicately drawn tulips, carnations and hyacinths. The guard stripes carry delicate rosettes and tiny leaves in green and ivory.

Pile, wool; warp, light red silk; weft, natural cotton; 238 to the square inch.

L. 16 ft. 9 in.
w. 9 ft. 8 in.
Lent by
S. Kent Costikyan.

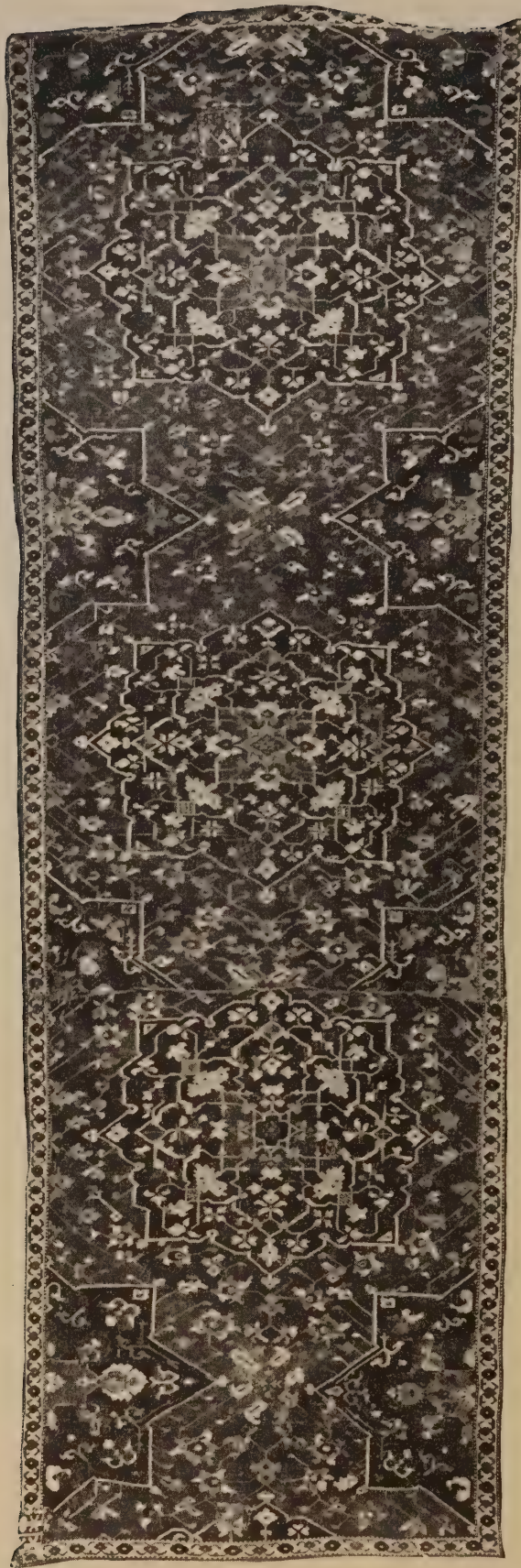
The double wave-like pattern projected against the flowers is probably a Chinese device representing clouds, but it came very early into Persian art. Prof. Herzfeld has noted⁽⁵⁰⁾ that it is to be found as a textile ornament on the garments of one of the riders in the Sassanian rock carvings of the great grotto at Tak-i-Boston. A silver Sassanian libation dish recently found in the vicinity of Bagdad contains the same device combined with a large rosette or sun disk, which further strengthens the interpretation of these bands as clouds.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Mr. C. F. Yao believes that the pattern was originally that on the robe of the Emperor of China, which bore on the right shoulder the sun, on the left the moon, at the back mountains and in the front two parallel clouds with three stars, thus signifying the four divisions of creation over which the Chinese Emperor was held to be overlord. It has generally been thought that this pattern was brought into Western Asia by the Moguls, but its presence in Sassanian ornament shows that it must have been taken over early in the history of commercial relations between China and the West. The device was a favorite one on Turkish textiles, and in connection with the three globes, is very common on velvets as well as the carpets of this type. It appears on several Persian carpets, also, as well as on Venetian brocades and velvets.⁽⁵¹⁾

The patterns are all closely related to those on the so-called Damascus faience, which we now know was made by Persian workmen.⁽⁵²⁾ Much of the Turkish faience,

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Cf. E. Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*. I am also indebted to Prof. Herzfeld for bringing the libation bowl to my attention.

⁽⁵¹⁾ For an interesting discussion of the pattern cf. A. F. Kendrick, *Turkish Textiles in the Victoria and Albert Museum*.

⁽⁵²⁾ Cf. Migeon et Sakisian, *La Ceramique d'Asie-Mineure*, Paris, 1923, p. 35.



Oushak Carpet

No. 38

wrongly called Rhodian, shows the same grace and refinement. These carpets enjoyed a great reputation even in the sixteenth century, and as early as 1474 Josafa Barbaro refers to them as if they were generally accepted as a world standard.⁽⁵³⁾ Unfortunately, only a few of these carpets remain. There are two fine ones in the Ballard collection in the Metropolitan Museum, one in the Victoria and Albert Museum, one in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum and a companion piece to this, almost the pendant, although smaller, was in the Yerkes collection.⁽⁵⁴⁾

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, OUSHAK, SECOND HALF XVI CENTURY CARPET WITH GOLD STARS

38

On a field of deep scarlet is a row of stellate medallions of composite construction intricately but clearly ornamented with conventionalized flowers and foliage. Straight sided eight-pointed stars project from the sides. The remaining spaces are decorated with finely drawn blossoms and foliage in green, blue, ivory and gold. The carpet is framed by a guard stripe of blossoms and vines in ivory. The main border is missing and the rug has been cut across the top of the first medallion.

L. 16 ft.
w. 3 ft. 10 in.
Lent by
Böhler & Steinmeyer.

This is one of the earliest and most brilliant of the Oushaks. It was woven at the time when the Persian influence was still strong. Similar pieces are in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum⁽⁵⁵⁾ and in the collection of C. F. Williams⁽⁵⁶⁾ now at the Metropolitan Museum. The medallions, consisting of stars within stars, for all their intricacy are clearly conceived and beautifully constructed. For this we probably have to thank the Persians, but the purity and depth of the colors, their strong but at the same time gentle and agreeable contrast, is a Turkish invention.

The surest evidence for early dating is to be found in the famous representation of an Oushak carpet in the painting by Paris Bordone, "The Ring and the Fisherman," now in the Academy at Venice, and the two dated pieces of somewhat later type in the collection of the Duke of Buccleigh.⁽⁵⁷⁾

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, OUSHAK, END XVI CENTURY ARABESQUE CARPET, SO-CALLED HOLBEIN

39

On a field of deep lustrous scarlet highly conventionalized arabesques and palmettes are arranged in interlocking open work patterns of quartrefoils and octagons in gold accented with greenish blue.

The border consists of tangent cartouches in red outlined in light blue on a field of light blue green with interior ornamentation of highly conventionalized flowers.

⁽⁵³⁾ Cf. Josafa Barbaro, *Travels to Tana and Persia*. London Edition, 1874, xl, p. 60.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ Cf. John Kimberley Mumford, *The Yerkes Collection of Carpets*, No. 35.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Bode-Kuehnel, *op. cit.* Abb. 73.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Cf. W. R. Valentiner, *Early Oriental Rugs*, New York, 1910.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ Cf. A.F. Kendrick, *Carpets at Boughton House*, *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. XXV, p. 73.



So-called Holbein Carpet

No. 40

Pile, wool; warp, natural wool; weft, wool dyed reddish, almost as heavy as the warp, 2 after each row of knots; knot, Turkish, 8½ vertical, 9 horizontal, 72-76 to the square inch.

L. 26 ft.
w. 8 ft. 6 in.
Lent by
Kelekian.

These carpets which, judging from the frequency of their appearance in paintings, were very popular in Europe from the middle of the sixteenth century through the seventeenth, are known only, with the exception of this piece, in small sizes. But the power and richness of the design, its noble decorative possibilities, can be realized to the full only on a broad expanse. Again we have an impressive example of what wonders could be wrought by the Turkish dyers and designers who could arrange such severely simple materials so that they bespoke opulence and grandeur.

This particular mellow red and soft gold are perfectly balanced, for there is enough yellow in the red to make possible a very agreeable union between the two.

The force of the design comes from the strong fret-like character of the pattern, with its innumerable dentations which stimulate the eye to an unusually active effort of exploration. The energy expended in these visual processes and their nervous concomitants is automatically transferred to the object and seen as its own essential and peculiar quality. Thus it is really our energy reflected back into the object which is the source of its appealing vigor. In the second place, the effort to grasp the pattern is both stimulating and satisfying because the concealed organization of the interlocking groups is controlled by inconspicuous but simple and familiar basal geometrical forms.

It is these carpets that decorated the floors of some of the greatest Tudor mansions in Queen Elizabeth's time. Most of these carpets have disappeared, so that it has been assumed that the floors of English houses of that period were always bare, but the inventories of the time show that some of the wealthiest nobles possessed great collections of these pieces, one list containing, indeed, 106 such items, ⁽⁵⁸⁾ while Cromwell's own inventory shows 22 Turkey carpets.

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, OUSHAK, SECOND HALF XVI CENTURY SO-CALLED HOLBEIN CARPET

40

Huge conventionalized leaf motives in mellow ivory arranged in open work, angular patterns form octagons and a kind of quatrefoil on a light scarlet ground. The border is decorated with conventionalized Kufic letters slightly whiter than the field ornament. The inner guard strip is dark blue.

Pile, wool; warp, white wool; weft, brownish red wool, 2 after each row of knots; knot, Turkish, 8 vertical, 8 horizontal, 64 to the square inch.

L. 8 ft. 1 in.
w. 4 ft. 10 in.
Lent by
Bernheimer Brothers.

This pattern, while vigorous, is static, depending for its force not on lines of suggested movement, but rather on energy of contours, sharp edges, incisive lines, extreme irregularity of silhouette and emphatic accents rhythmically repeated. The border, though it has much the same character, by its greater density provides a perfectly balanced frame.

The aesthetic formula governing this design is purely Turkish in feeling, although some of the elements can be traced back through Persia, perhaps to Central Asia.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Inventory of Lord Lumley, 1590. In Walpole Society, 1917-18, p. 28, 38.



So-called Holbein Carpet

No. 41

Others, such as the wing-like half arabesque that marks the corners of the octagons, look to Byzantium. The style had a marked influence on certain Spanish carpets.

No carpet could better illustrate the irrelevance of fineness of stitch to aesthetic value. Only 64 knots to the inch, by virtue of the superiority of its color and pattern, it quite diminishes many weavings of pretentious technique. It is no wonder these carpets were dearly beloved of sixteenth century European painters.

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, OUSHAK, FIRST HALF XVI CENTURY
SO-CALLED HOLBEIN CARPET

41

On a field of deep green are three rows of octagonal rosettes alternating with ogival compartments containing quatrefoils, principally in red and gold and with black accents. The octagons are arranged in diagonal repeats.

The border consists of a highly decorative lattice pattern formed of conventionalized Kufic letters, ivory on red.

L. 5 ft. 6 in.
W. 3 ft. 6 in.
Lent by
Böhler & Steinmeyer.

This is one of the earliest types of carpets to appear in Europe. Although in Europe especially the term "Holbein Carpet" has been reserved almost exclusively for this type, because the rug which appears in the portrait of George Gisze has almost exactly this pattern, there is a score of artists whose names might quite as justly be attached to the vigorous and engaging design. Even in the fifteenth century in paintings by Mantegna, Pinturicchio, and Ghirlandajo beautiful examples are depicted, and a Rafaellino del Garbo in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum shows, conspicuously placed on the throne of the Madonna, as clear, brilliant and exact a rendition of such a carpet as has ever been executed in paint.

These rugs are justly admired and treasured. Only the smallest number have come to America, and only one or two comparable to this piece. Its masculine beauty, the splendid firmness and clarity of the entire pattern and the intricate but logical relations of all of the decorative elements mark it as an admirable achievement, coming from just that significant moment in the history of the art of carpet weaving in Asia Minor when it was coming to the crest of its power.

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, OUSHAK, END XVI CENTURY
QUATREFOIL MEDALLION CARPET

42

On a field of deep scarlet is a quatrefoil medallion in large scale, in sapphire blue ornamented with lotus flowers, which in turn bears within it a smaller quatrefoil medallion in scarlet, the lobes of which are outlined by pale blue arabesques, the whole device centering on a square ornamented with gold and blue leaves. Above at either side half medallions project from the sides. The field is covered with broken vines with geometrical palmettes in gold, light green and blue. In the border are alternating conventionalized flowers in green and white, bracketed by pairs of arabesques joined at tip and base in darker green. (Cf. Vase Carpet No. 16).



Oushak Carpet

No. 42

Pile, wool; warp, white wool; weft, wool dyed bright red, 2 after each row of knots; knot, Turkish, 9 vertical, 9½ horizontal, 85 to the square inch.

L. 10 ft. 3 in.
W. 7 ft. 7 in.
Lent by
James F. Ballard.

No carpet could better illustrate the characteristics of Turkish taste. The breadth, simplicity, richness of color and grandeur of design are all qualities which the Turk especially loved. The four principal colors are perfect in themselves and superbly balanced, so that each is a foil for the others throughout the composition, thus intensifying and deepening the color effect. The angular lattice of flowers is to be found on the early Northwest Persia carpets Numbers 1 and 2 in this collection, and a quite similar arrangement forms the background of the Milan Hunting carpet. The quatrefoil is older still. In one of the earliest forms yet found, a somewhat simpler version, it appears on a Guebri bowl recently acquired in Persia for the Chicago Art Institute; but on the carpet it is displayed with an amplitude and power and a suggestion of weight wholly un-Persian and quite unlike anything else in the history of the textile arts.

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, OUSHAK, END XVI CENTURY MEDALLION CARPET

43

The main field is a pure soft red, delicately covered with crisp conventionalized vines and foliage in glowing blue. The oval central medallion and half end medallions are in lustrous blue, enclosing a quatrefoil medallion composed of arabesques in gold and red. The intricate flanking star medallions, also composed largely of arabesques, are in deep shades of green with the principal ornamentation in red and gold. The border consists of small, beautifully drawn palmettes in gold and blue on a deep lustrous red like that of the field.

L. 22 ft.
W. 9 ft. 4 in.
Lent by
S. Kent Costikyan.

The dentated margin of the main medallions in this piece is probably derived directly from the flaming Buddhist halo which had for many centuries been familiar to the Persians and which they had appropriated both in various illuminations and in carpet designs. The great star forms are at least as old as Sassanian art. A recently discovered piece of Sassanian brocade of the eighth century shows a somewhat similar form as the interstitial ornament between the great circles, while a Rhages bowl in the collection of Parish Watson shows a quite similar form.⁽⁵⁹⁾ This carpet represents the summit of Oushak weaving. Such luxury and magnificence of color could hardly be equalled in any fabric, and the balance between the various tones is quite as notable as the force, purity and richness of the tones themselves. The carpet echoes the grandeur and magnificence of one of the most luxurious courts the world has ever known; a court which, despite even the glories of the Renaissance, quite astounded European visitors.

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, OUSHAK, ABOUT 1600. MEDALLION CARPET

44

A field of very deep blue is almost concealed by a great round scarlet medallion with an irregular deeply serrated margin and an interior ornamentation of arabesques in dark blue and gold, with small gold and scarlet pendants. Huge turquoise complex star or rosace

⁽⁵⁹⁾ Cf. Arthur Upham Pope, *Oriental Rugs as Fine Art*, International Studio, December, 1922, p. 250.



Oushak Carpet

No. 43

forms project from the sides of the field. The lobes are decorated by outline arabesques and lotus in gold and red. The remainder of the field, scarcely more than a band surrounding the medallion and extending between points of the stars, is closely covered with sharply fragmented, highly decorative flowers and vines in gold and yellow.

In the border, conventionalized flowers in white and red are set on an undulating vine in blue on a scarlet ground.

Pile, wool; warp, white wool; weft, reddish wool 2 after each row of knots; knot, Turkish, 11 vertical, 7½ horizontal, 81 to the square inch. End borders rewoven.

L. 12 ft. 4 in.
w. 9 ft.
Lent by
B. Altman & Co.

Just as the sixteenth century Vase carpets and Dragon carpets turned from predominant red toward blue, so also the Oushaks exhibit the same tendency. Probably the initiating impulse emanated from the court at Isfahan. This carpet, in spite of the predominance of the blue, must be placed at the very beginning of the seventeenth century. The firmness and clearness of the drawing, the clear conception of the arabesques and the understanding of the great star forms, both of which in later work became sadly confused, are sure evidence of a high period. The rich and decided colors are skilfully assimilated to one another by a number of interesting devices. The great medallion settles gently into its deep background because of the large serrations, undoubtedly derived from the Buddhist flaming halos of Central Asia which serve as a sort of fringe, carrying the medallion color into the field, and the field color into the medallion, and embracing the whole figure with a soft radiance. The intensity of the blue ground is quietly modified by the irregular distribution over the entire surface of the complementary shades of yellow. In exploring any of these surfaces, the eye necessarily mingles the two complementaries. The effect of this is not merely to clarify and intensify each color, but also to create a neutral haze around each contour that obliterates all friction.

The type of arabesque in the center is, as are those in the Ardebil carpet, taken over directly from the painters of the fifteenth century. The interesting structure, consisting of other arabesques and half arabesques, may be seen, for example, in its original brilliant and perfect form in "Khosrau Murdered by Sheruja at Shirin's Side" by some member of the school of Bizhad. ⁽⁶⁰⁾

It was this type of carpet, so sumptuous and splendid, that particularly attracted Louis XIV, and in the series of Gobelins tapestries illustrating the life of Louis XIV, in the piece representing his visit to the Gobelins, a fine example on a similar blue ground is portrayed. Even finer pieces are depicted in the set of tapestries illustrating the life of Augustus in the royal residence in Munich, a second weaving of which is in the Bayerische National Museum. The type, unrecognizably degenerate, persisted into the nineteenth century.

Published and illustrated in color: Jacoby, *Eine Sammlung Orientalischer Teppiche*, s. 105, Tafel 32.

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, FIRST HALF XVII CENTURY FLORAL CARPET

Rows of red and gold leaves and foliage on a ground of soft blue form various overlapping diamond and hexagonal patterns. The border consists of highly simplified and conventionalized leaf and flower patterns in gold and blue on lustrous mellow red.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Illustrated Ph. W. Schulz, *Die persech - islamische Miniaturmalerei*, Tafel 58.



Bergamo Carpet

No. 47

Pile, wool; warp, heavy white wool; weft, wool dyed red, 2 after each row of knots; knot, Turkish, 13 vertical, 11 horizontal, 143 to the square inch. End borders rewoven.

L. 8 ft. 3 in.
W. 5 ft.
Lent by
Indjoudjian Freres.

The carpet is not a common type, and even among Turkish rugs its mellow, lustrous and beautifully balanced tones are notable. Only a few colors have been used, yet the color effect is rich and deep. Two kinds of red and two of blue, and one yellow constitute the main tones with white, brown and fawn used sparingly as buffer tones.

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, OUSHAK, FIRST HALF XVII CENTURY

46

A double arched panel of deep glowing red carries a gold center medallion decorated with incisively drawn conventionalized Persian arabesques, lotus and foliage patterns in green and blue. The vigorous corner ornaments are in gold and green and the deep blue border is ornamented by the Turkish edition of the cloudband.

Pile, wool; warp, white wool; weft, red wool, 2 after each row of knots, knot, Turkish; 10 horizontal, 12 vertical, 123 to the square inch. End borders rewoven.

L. c. 5 ft.
W. c. 3 ft.
Lent by
Indjoudjian Freres.

These rich and intense little carpets were evidently great favorites in Northern Europe and the countries bordering on Turkey in the seventeenth century, and a large export trade grew up, especially with England and Holland. This particular type is not quite as common as the one with the all-over pattern in gold. They appear in the work of such painters as Tintoretto, Veneziano, Matteo Roselli from the middle of the sixteenth to well into the seventeenth century.

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, BERGAMO, XVII CENTURY NOMADIC CARPET IN XV CENTURY STYLE

47

The carpet, which is nearly square, is equally divided into two panels. In each of these, on a ground of curious red, is a white octagon bearing a red many-pointed star containing a complicated octagon surrounded by a circlet of small stars, all in various tones of ivory, blue, green, violet. Vari-colored checker board patterns fill the panel corners. The ivory border carries a succession of coarse little rosettes between rigid sets of leaves.

Pile, wool, once very thick; warp, wool; weft wool, dyed reddish, 2 after each row of knots; knot, Turkish, 9 vertical, 7 horizontal, 63 to the square inch.

L. 4 ft. 5 in.
W. 3 ft. 7 in.
Lent by
S. Kent Costikyan.

Although this sturdy little carpet may have been woven as late as the seventeenth century, it really is a child of the fifteenth. Pieces of this general type are to be found in a great many pictures of the early painters, such as Memling, Ghirlandajo, Crivelli and especially Carpaccio. This exact type seems to have disappeared rather early, although the general scheme in a modified form lasted well down into the nineteenth century. It is certainly controlled by the ideas and artistic habits of the nomads, who very likely wove this actual piece. The octagons suggest Central Asia, while the star-like central pattern may be reminiscent of early Persian or Oushak carpets. The carpet is exceedingly rare. A somewhat earlier piece in the Kaiser



Bergamo Carpet

No. 49

Friedrich Museum resembles it very closely but lacks a little of the richness and tang of color that distinguish this piece. It is remarkable what energy and importance can be crowded into such a small fabric by the right kind of pattern and color chord.

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, BERGAMO, END XVII CENTURY

48

A field of pure and deep red carries a central quarterfoil medallion in gold. The corner designs of highly conventionalized Kufic letters are rendered in moss green. The border of deep bluish green of varying tones is ornamented with heavy conventionalized Chinese cloud bands in round alternating with geometrical rosettes in white, gold and violet.

Pile, wool; warp, plain white wool; weft, wool dyed red, 2 to 4, irregularly, after each row of knots; knot, Turkish, 9 vertical, 7½ horizontal, 76 to the square inch.

l. 6 ft. 7 in.
w. 4 ft. 11 in.
Lent by
B. Altman & Co.

The rich colors and simple pattern of this carpet are quite characteristic of the taste of the common people at this time. While special weavers for the court were producing extremely intricate and elegant work carpets of this type expressed the common taste. Although the elements of the design are originally Persian, they have now been reduced to an almost unrecognizably simple formula. The agreeably unpretentious pattern exists merely for the sake of carrying the rich and glowing colors and providing opportunities for color mixtures and color contrasts.

Published Heinrich Jacoby, Eine Sammlung Orientalischer Teppiche, Tafel 36.

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, BERGAMO, SECOND HALF XVII CENTURY

49

A central panel in ruby red with arch-like ends and pyramidal side indentations is broadly decorated by a series of sharply drawn, detached flowers in white blue, green and yellow and the corners are decorated with very rigid and simple arabesques.

In the border are simple cartouches in ivory containing pairs of conventionalized arabesques alternating with smaller stellate cartouches.

l. 5 ft. 9 in.
w. 3 ft. 11 in.
Lent by
Bernheimer Brothers.

These carpets might well be called in Victorian phraseology the "Painters Delight," for a list of the seventeenth century European painters who rendered them with various degrees of accuracy would include a large percentage of the important names. So many hundreds of these pieces have been found in Transylvania that the name for this region, the Seven Mountain district, has become attached to the rugs in Europe as their common name. It is plain that they were manufactured in great numbers and the traffic in them was commercially important.⁽⁶¹⁾

For all that they do not measure up to the early examples of the Holbein style they are, nevertheless, very decorative and agreeable, with a satisfying frank honesty and unpretentiousness. Their chief claim to our affections lies in the force and vibrancy of the colors which, by comparison, quite extinguish the fading colors that became popular in Turkey in the following century.

⁽⁶¹⁾ For color plates of many similar pieces cf. J. de Végh, Tapis Turcs.



Ladik Prayer Carpet

No. 50

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, LADIK, EARLY XVIII CENTURY
PRAYER CARPET

50

One looks through the high triple arch which is carried on slender, sharply drawn ivory columns to a field of deepest red. Across the top is a reciprocal arrow-headed battlement from which springs a row of tulips and hyacinths in gold, white and blue. The border consists of oval cartouches on a red ground.

Pile, wool; warp, wool, pale red; weft, coarse wool dyed bright red, 2 after each row of knots; warp and weft approximately same size. Sides double sel-vage on two red wool cords.

L. 5 ft. 2 in.
w. 3 ft. 7 in.
Lent by
Bernheimer Brothers.

The weaving of this carpet is technically so different from the other carpets usually ascribed to Oushak, and it has so much in common with rugs of later dates that we know were woven in Ladik, that we are warranted in thinking that it really does come from the latter region. The ordinary Ladik is frequently put down as seventeenth century, although since four dated pieces have been found—1794, 1799, 1804, 1807—it seems certain that the majority of the type were woven in the beginning of the nineteenth century. We are warranted in putting this carpet back to the seventeenth or early eighteenth century, largely on the basis of the clear and rational architecture which is exhibited. In later Asia Minor carpets the columns frequently terminate in empty leaf forms or in water cans, or are themselves merely lace-like floral bands wholly devoid of architectural quality—incongruities that mark a slackening care and intelligence. But the drawing of the architecture in this carpet closely resembles that of a few Broussa prayer carpets that were certainly done as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century.(62)

The reciprocal battlement above the arches is one of the oldest ornamental forms in the Orient. In this particular form it is common in Cairene architecture of the fourteenth century, but it has a far older history. One of Professor Herzfeld's many remarkable discoveries this last year in Persia was a rock cut relief dated by inscription 2800 B. C., which shows a simple stepped form of the reciprocal battlement, from which the later forms were ultimately derived.

The carpet was woven upside down, so that the weaver might come more quickly to the points of the arches and thus get them properly centered as early in the weaving as possible.

WESTERN ASIA MINOR, GHIORDES, EARLY XVII CENTURY

51

The field is composed of a succession of concentric panels, in the very center a small red quatrefoil with light blue margins surrounded by a scalloped panel in light blue with a delicate ornamentation of conventionalized foliage in red and white. This motive in turn rests on an irregularly shaped field of ivory white decorated at either end with a pendent lamp and covered with tiny cloud forms in brown. The corners, which may be thought of either as corners or as a ground panel carrying the whole decoration of the field, are in emerald green with a geometrical arrangement of flowers and stems.

The main border consists of alternating pyramidal patterns in blue and red showing a white zigzag band between. The guard stripes are delicately undulating vines and leaves on white.

L. 3 ft. 6 in.
w. 3 ft. 1 in.
Lent by
S. Kent Costikyan.

(62) An especially fine one in the collection of James F. Ballard, many times illustrated, and a very beautiful piece in the Schloss Museum in Berlin, will be illustrated in the second volume of the new Vienna carpet book (cf. Bibliography).



Ghiordes Carpet

No. 51

*Pile, wool; warp, wool, one thread depressed; weft, wool; knot, Turkish,
13 vertical, 11 horizontal, 143 to the square inch.*

Ghiordes weavers produced such charming little mats as well as their more famous prayer carpets. Extravagant age was claimed for the first pieces of the type that appeared on the European market about forty years ago, but it is easy to show that the typical Ghiordes prayer rug is nearly always an eighteenth century production, and that many of them were made at the beginning even of the nineteenth century. This little piece, however, must be regarded as one of the earliest known of the group.

As a work of art its merits are obvious: the purity, force and variety of the coloring and the simplicity and energy of the patterns. These same qualities are also indications of age. The common carpets of the type are nearly always pallid in color and excessively refined in drawing having somewhat succumbed to the modern French influence with its boudoir tastes which was strong in this region in the eighteenth century. The affiliations of this carpet are with a far more virile culture. It reflects the energy and decision which characterized the earlier epochs of Turkish power when the very name of the Turks was a symbol of dread.





Altar Carpet

IV

CARPET FROM EGYPT



EGYPT, EARLY XVI CENTURY
CAIRO

52

The carpet is divided into three main sections; each center is occupied by a complex, circular or hexagonal medallion rendered in a variety of shades of blue, green, ruby and gold. The border consists of the long cartouches and small rosette cartouches, with delicate ornamentations of geometrical flower sprays, principally in green, ruby and blue.

Lent by
Demotie.

Until recently these carpets have been a profound mystery, and have probably carried a greater variety of names than has ever been attached to an Eastern carpet. They have been published as Damascus, Syrian, Syracuse, Asia Minor, Morocco and Hispano Moresque. Thanks now to the researches of Dr. Sarre, we can identify this type with as great or greater surety than any sixteenth century rug. In two notable articles⁽⁶³⁾ he has shown to the satisfaction of most scholars that these rugs are really the products of the looms of Cairo from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century.

The patterns themselves have a great variety of sources, most of them common in Egypt since the twelfth century, and others dating from early Coptic times. The carpet has taken its general form from the beautiful Mosaic fountains which one sees still today in Cairo, and of which there are fine examples in the Arab Museum there, as well as in the Louvre and in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Some of the complex star forms are to be found in Coptic textiles, as are other patterns, such as the little conical tree embraced by leaves, which appears in the famous carpet belonging to the Austrian state⁽⁶⁴⁾ and in the carpet from the Ballard collection⁽⁶⁵⁾ in the Metropolitan Museum but missing in this piece. Some of these star forms follow very closely the star and circle ornaments common in the Mosque of Sayedna Husein (1155) and Beybars First (1269). The long cartouche and rosette patterns are taken from the borders of book covers, particularly those of the fifteenth century. It is not impossible that the Cairene stained glass of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries owed a good deal to the kaleidoscopic brilliance and richness of these pieces.

The patterns and the color scheme are quite unlike anything known in Persia and Asia Minor rug weaving, and represents one of the finest of many remarkable achievements that we owe to Muhammadan art in Egypt. From the tenth century on, Egypt vied with Persia in the production of a great variety of superb creations in all metiers, and the extraordinary beauty of these carpets was sustained by a succession of great triumphs that preceded. There is little motion depicted in these patterns, but they are

⁽⁶³⁾ Cf. Footnote 10.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ To appear in color in the new Vienna Book (cf. Bibliography).

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Published in Breck. Morris, *The James F. Ballard Collection of Oriental Rugs*, N. Y., 1923, No. 18 and by Dr. R. M. Riefstahl, *Das Palmenmotiv auf einem Ägyptischen Teppich der Ballard Sammlung in Jahrbuch der Asiatischer Kunst*, 1925, p. 159.



Modern Silk Carpet

No. 55

highly stimulating none the less, and the bewildering variety of jewel-like facets is always controlled by a structural sense that prevents confusion without in any way diminishing the infinite resources of the minor orders. The blending of the colors is achieved not only by the minute fragmentation and mingling of them, but by the silvery sheen that lies almost like frosty dew over the whole carpet. Behind this lustrous veil the colors assemble themselves in a rich and grateful harmony.





So-called Holbein Carpet

No. 39

V

CARPETS FROM SPAIN



SPAIN, XVI CENTURY

ALTAR CARPET

53

The field of pale red is closely covered with a small lace-like pattern, consisting of two types of richly decorated interlacing ogives in ivory and blue. In the center a round-cornered, square panel contains a broadly rendered, conventionalized wreath framing the Christian symbol, a phoenix rising from the flames, and the devices: VICTORIA DOC TIS (sic) and within, EXMEMET RENIASCOR. In the four corners are smaller irregular panels, each bearing a death's head above crossed nails framed in a wreath.

The border carries a complex pattern, alternating long and short, consisting essentially of pairs of arabesques united on an interior framework which in the larger pattern encloses a fleur-de-lis.

Lent by
Demotte

Despite the austere symbols this carpet, by virtue of its mellow tones and delicate lace-like design, achieves graciousness and stateliness. Like the other Spanish altar carpets, it represents the highest attainment of the Spanish weavers and is exceedingly fine and tight in weave. It is closely related, if not the exact pendant, to a well-known carpet in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which likewise bears the death's head symbols but has in place of the phoenix the monogram I H S. ⁽⁶⁶⁾

The date is of great interest, although, thanks to a common fate that seems to pursue inscribed documents, the critical figure, here the 2, has been so extensively repaired that it is impossible to guarantee that this is the original number. The carpet was damaged on a lengthwise fold which necessitated reweaving a considerable part of the medial line. There are remnants of the original weft threads at the back and part of the 2 is still original, but there can be no assurance that an 8 was not intended, though the meager evidence of the original strands is quite as much in favor of the 2. The pattern, though we have insufficient evidence for dating it, points rather toward the end of the century than the beginning.

While the panels are entirely European, the very firm and graceful border looks back to oriental models. The ground pattern, as lovely as anything to be found in carpet design, is derived from one of the early Hispano-Moresque brocades, which as early as the tenth century attained remarkable beauty. The piece was undoubtedly woven by Muhammadan workmen in the employ of the Christian church.

SPANISH CARPET, MIDDLE XVI CENTURY

SO-CALLED SALAMANCA CARPET

54

Three large floral wreaths in gold green and bluish green are placed on a field of pale

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Victoria and Albert Museum, Guide to the Collection of Carpets, No. 341, p. 64, Pl. XL.

green. The borders consist of highly decorative scrolling leaves in the same tones, roughly indicating a double-headed flying dragon.

Lent by
De Motte

Despite the simplicity of means, the general effect is one of great dignity and charm. The angularities and deep irregular serrations of the larger wreathes endow them with an almost metallic firmness. The border is full of a lively fluttering movement that comes from the vibrant contours of the scrolling vines.

The exact provenance of this type of carpet is not really known. The customary attribution to Salamanca has never been established by any detailed evidence, although it is a reasonable hypothesis.

This carpet marks a transition from the Gothic designs to those of the Renaissance. The formality and elegance of the latter period are now making themselves felt decisively. The carpet is no doubt a rather close copy of some of the early Renaissance silk brocades. Muhammadan influence still shows, not only in the decorative breadth of the design and the concentration of energy in the individual patterns, but more specifically in the formal flower sprays that project from the sides and the corners, which are found in the manuscript ornamentation and faience decoration of many periods.



MODERN CARPET

SILK CARPET COPYING PERSIAN XVI CENTURY VELVET CONTEMPORARY

55

Curving lancet leaves in golden ivory, with a spotted deer clinging to each one, divide a ruby red field into ogival compartments. The leaves are decorated with lotus flowers in green and red and at the intersections are lion mask palmettes. In each compartment is an ivory cartouche outlined in silvery green blue containing two personages standing on either side of a conventionalized plane tree. On the right is a prince holding a falcon and on the left his servant carrying a sack over his shoulder and a purse in his left hand. The colors of the costumes vary in different cartouches—the prince is sometimes in a dark blue cloak with gold sleeves and green trousers, his servant predominantly in gold, sometimes in an olive or emerald green cloak with red sleeves and gold trousers, his servant predominantly in green. Above the tree is a wild goose in flight and in the spaces small flowering plants.

The border, of the same silvery blue green that appears in the cartouche outlines, bears two similar personages alternating with a plane tree. The prince now holds a carafe and wine bowl and wears alternately a red and a gold cloak; the servant still has the sack over his shoulder but now carries a flower in his other hand. He is dressed alternately in gold and light olive green. The outer guard stripe in old gold has alternately flower sprays and lotus or red rosettes; the inner, of the same color, bears interlacing arabesques and spirals.

Warp, silk; weft, red silk, 2 after each row of knots; knot, Persian, c. 2500 to the square inch.

l. 5 ft. 8 in.
w. 3 ft. 7 in.
Lent
Anonymously.

Those insecure in their appreciations, who bestow their admiration according to periods and glow automatically with enthusiasm when the right word is pronounced may be perplexed when they know that this beautiful weaving was finished in 1907 and the weaver is still alive. But permission to enjoy such loveliness should not wait upon authority or argument. Those conscious of the masterpieces of earlier centuries should be the first to welcome this modern counterpart. Here is weaving of a fineness never achieved, not even attempted as far as we know, in earlier times, exceeding by two hundred and sixty knots to the inch the closest woven sample of early work that we have, the tiny fragment from the bottom of a prayer carpet now in the Altman Collection (2240 knots to the square inch). As far as the actual technique of weaving and of depicting a pattern in a pile surface is concerned the piece has not been surpassed in any age. In the accuracy and elegance of the contours, which literally rival those of the miniature paintings, it will be found more exquisite and meticulously perfect than even the great silk hunting carpet of the Austrian State Collection. Moreover, those who care to spend the effort for closer examination will find many details of surprising

subtlety and relevant ingenuity. The carpet is gratifying proof that the capacity for weaving did not depart with the great Safavian Shahs.

But while these praises are all warranted it does not follow that the Masters of the sixteenth century must now hide their diminished heads. For, in the first place, the design is but a faithful replica of one of the early famous Isfahan or Kashan velvets ⁽⁶⁷⁾ which touched the utmost possibilities of the art and whatever merit of beauty it has is derived directly from the ideas and inspirations of earlier days. And, in the second place, its colors, while delightful and at many points gratifying, lack something in purity and timbre. It would hardly be fair to the carpet to put it in too close proximity to such pieces as the Kurdish Medallion Carpet (No. 4) on the one hand or the Fragment of a Floral Carpet (No. 10) on the other. The piece exhibits wonderfully fine and accurate observation, extraordinary dexterity and inexhaustible patience but it hardly shows evidence of creative inspiration. There is an interesting problem also as to whether or not fineness of weave can not be carried to a point of diminishing aesthetic returns, whether the carpet would lose or gain if it were half as fine, whether or not it is better frankly to exhibit the character of the weaving or by superlative skill to transcend the limits of the art and pass into the realm of the painter and the enameller.

It is an amusing fact that a fragment similar in weave and done by the same weaver at the same time passed through the hands of a very famous rug expert and thence to a dealer who published it in color as the finest fragment of antique Persian weaving ever found. It was finally sold for a thumping price to a proud and still unsuspecting European collector.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Now in the collection of Mr. V. Everit Macy.



BIBLIOGRAPHY



A BIBLIOGRAPHY that gave a full list of all works having some bearing on Oriental Carpets would run into many thousands of titles and would be a source of confusion to most readers. The following list contains only the outstanding publications that are directly concerned with carpets themselves. The serious student must also consult various works dealing with the history, geography, ethnology as well as the sociology and economics of the rug producing regions, and must have an outline acquaintance with Muhammadan Art in general such as is to be found in Kuehnel's admirable outline of the subject, *Islamische Kleinkunst*, Berlin, 1925, or Migeon's standard work, *Manuel de l'Art Musulman*, shortly to appear in a new edition. It was thought that frank comments on the books listed would be of more use than the usual vague encomiums or complete silence.

Wilhelm von Bode und Ernest Kuehnel. Vorderasiatische Knüpfteppiche aus Älterer Zeit. Dritte Auflage. Leipsic, 1922. (English translation, R. M. Riefstahl, E. Weyhe, N. Y.)

One of the fundamental books on the subject. Compact, systematic, clear. Does not make much effort to relate rug weaving to the cultural background that produced it and contains a number of details that could be corrected, but is a work that because of its acute observations and its detailed record of early rugs in European painting will always be indispensable. Contains 95 good half tones of the most important known carpets.

Joseph Breck and Francis Morris. The James F. Ballard Collection of Oriental Rugs. New York, 1923. 129 illustrations and a number of pattern sketches. A good record of the best pieces in the Ballard Collection. Text conservative.

Werner Grote-Hasenbalg. Der Orientteppich; seine Geschichte und seine Kultur. Berlin, 1922.

Numerous illustrations both in color and black and white containing, in addition to carpets, examples of allied Muhammadan Arts. Awkward format, poor, irrelevant color plates of interiors, and some errors such as are inevitable in any book on rugs; but on the whole the best general book that deals with the entire range of carpets, antique and modern. Important information and good knowledge of the literature.

W. A. Hawley. Oriental Rugs, Antique and Modern. New York, 1913.

A serious and systematic work. Weakest in its discussion of antique carpets. Very detailed classifications of the nineteenth century rugs, some of which are un-

certain. Useful painstaking analyses of technical structure. Like Mumford and other American books, gives a misleading impression that our knowledge of Oriental carpets is much more complete and secure than it is.

Heinrich Jacoby. Eine Sammlung Orientalischer Teppiche. Berlin, 1922.

Written around a collection of forty-seven pieces, some of which are of little merit, but others of which rank with the best known. Very thoughtful comments, important information concerning dyes, refutation of Martin's hypothesis of the Armenian origin of Dragon carpets. In technical details apparently counts each horizontal knot twice. Exceptional illustrations especially of an important series of Caucasus carpets.

A. F. Kendrick and C. E. Tattersall. Hand woven carpets, Antique and Modern. London, 1922.

Immense number of illustrations, unfortunately many of them of carpets without historical or aesthetic merit. Text brief and conservative.

A. F. Kendrick and C. E. Tattersall. Fine Carpets in the Victoria and Albert Museums.

Beautiful color plates of some important carpets and some not important. Excellent brief description. Drawings of technical details by Tattersall that are most important and so well done that they must serve as models for a long time.

J. Arthur MacLean. Catalogue of Oriental Rugs in the Collection of James F. Ballard. Indianapolis, 1924.

A handsomely prepared catalogue covering a loan exhibition of carpets in Mr. Ballard's Collection that are not in the Metropolitan Museum or illustrated in the Breck-Morris catalogue.

F. R. Martin. A History of Oriental Carpets before 1800, 2 vols. London, 1906.

A monumental and indispensable work, with numerous illustrations, including many superb color plates of important carpets and very valuable illustrations of examples of allied Muhammadan arts. Important statements relative to Polonaise and Herat carpets. Despite these merits full of deplorable defects. Attributions of impossible accuracy are attempted without evidence, dates are frequently wrong by centuries, fantastic speculations are set down as facts, and the text is incoherent and grammatically inaccurate almost to the point of illiteracy. Long out of print.

John Kimberly Mumford. The Yerkes Collection of Oriental Carpets. New York, 1911.

An important record of the finest collection of Persian carpets owned by a private individual in modern times. Each rug reproduced in color, some well, others poorly. Extensive text with each piece, not without serious deficiencies at some points due to the neglect of contemporary European studies of the subject.

John Kimberly Mumford. Oriental Rugs. (Last ed.) New York, 1915.

The pioneer work in the classification of nineteenth century rugs. Based on

first hand knowledge for the most part, written with good sense and a lively and sympathetic imagination in a style at once lucid and charming. Used as a mine by innumerable subsequent writers, generally without acknowledgement. Did more than anything else to promote interest in Oriental rugs in this country. References to early rugs negligible. Like Hawley, fails to give proof of modern attributions. Latter probably correct and could have been supplied, but the importance of something like proof was not appreciated when the book was written.

Munich Catalogue. (See Sarre.)

Arthur Upham Pope. Oriental Rugs as Fine Art, International Studio, New York, November, 1922, to April, 1923.

Arthur Upham Pope. Values in Oriental Rugs, Arts and Decoration, New York, June, August, October, 1922.

The above contain some statements shown by subsequent research to be erroneous. Will be published shortly in corrected and enlarged form.

Friedrich Sarre. Altorientalische teppiche. (English edition Ancient Oriental Carpets.) Leipzig, 1908.

This supplement to the first Vienna book contains many superb color plates of important carpets. Dr. Sarre's text is scholarly and informing. An indispensable reference book. Out of print.

Meisterwerke Muhamedanischen Kunst. Die Teppiche. Bd. I, Teil II.

The catalogue of the carpets at the exhibition of Muhammadan Art held in Munich in 1910. One of the great source books. Remarkable black and white illustrations of famous carpets of all kinds. Text brief. Out of print.

Mittelalterliche Knüpfteppiche kleinasiatische und spanischen Herkunft. In Kunst und Kunst handwerk X Jahrg. (1907) Heft 10.

The first as well as the most serious and important study of Spanish rugs.

Vienna Book. The common and convenient title used in America for Altorientalische Teppiche, Herausgegeben vom Kaiserlich königlich Österreichische Orient und Obersee Gesellschaft. Vienna, 1892-6. English Edition, Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke, London, 1892-6.

The first important book on Oriental carpets. A sumptuous and monumental production. Contains finest color plates that could be made and essays of varying merit by the most qualified scholars of the time. Contains some inferior rugs and antiquated text, but the pattern analyses by Riegel are admirable, as are many of his penetrating observations. Long out of print, but always a useful source book.

Supplement, Leipzig, 1908. (See Sarre.)

New Edition; *Altorientalische Teppiche, herausgegeben vom Österreichischen Museum für Kunst und Industrie, bearbeitet von Friedrich Sarre und Ernst Trenkwald.*

Wien, Leipzig, 1925-6. English edition, Quaritch, London. (E. Weyhe, N. Y.)

Volume one contains the famous carpets of the Austrian State Collection, considerably enriched since the war, with a text by Dr. Trenkwald, Director of the Museum. Volume two will contain carpets from European and American Collections, with a text by Dr. Sarre and a short treatise on the history of Oriental Carpets. The color plates surpass anything achieved in the representation of rugs. These two volumes will be the standard source book for generations.

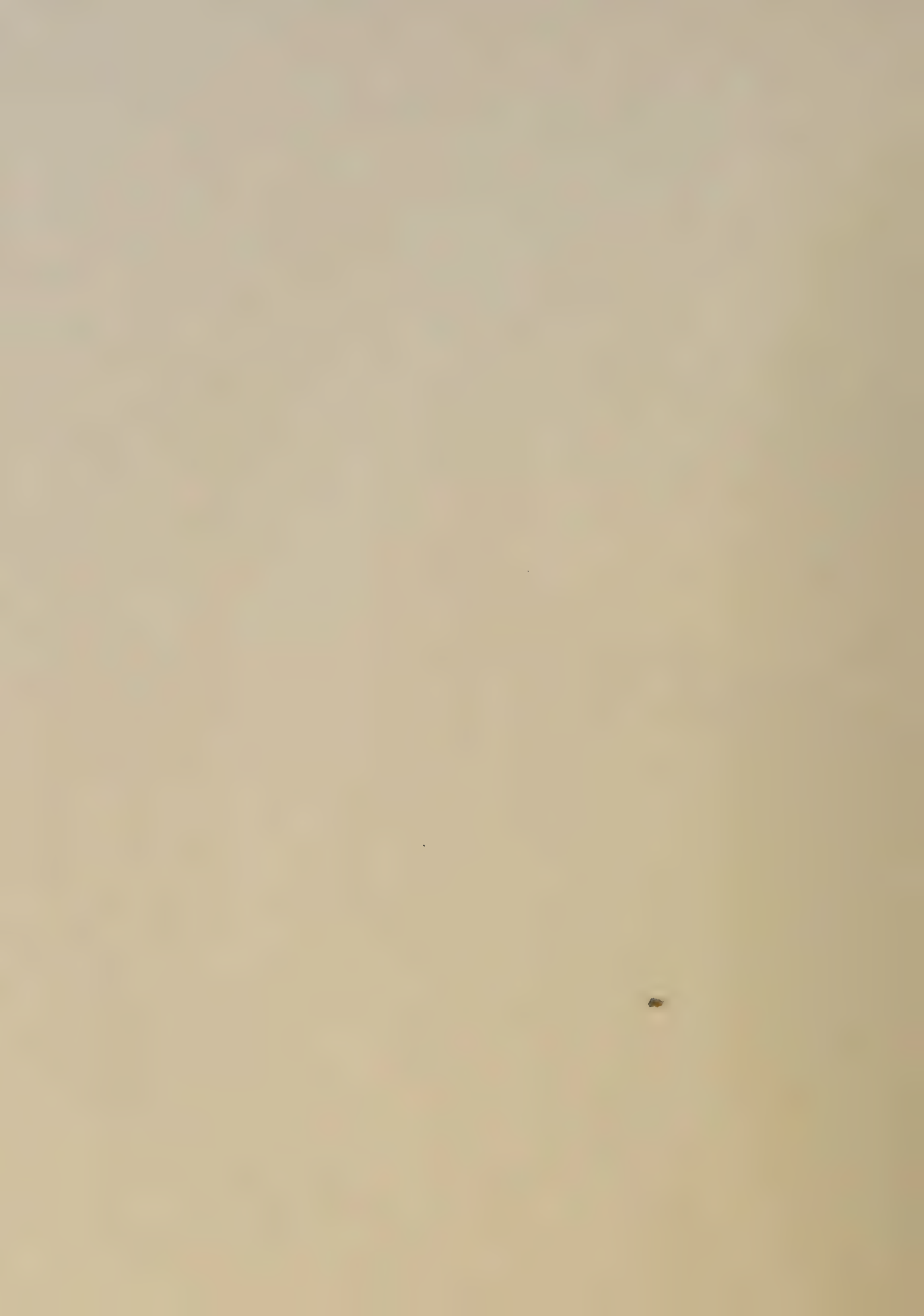
J. deVégh and Charles Layer. Tapis Turcs. Paris, 1925.

Portfolio of excellent color plates of Turkish rugs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Brief text. A very useful publication.

W. R. Valentiner. Catalogue of a Loan Exhibition of Early Oriental Rugs. New York, 1910.

A small but important record of one of the most important exhibitions of early carpets ever held. Catalogue, a model of its kind, could hardly have been better at time of writing. The exhibition and catalogue were decisive factors in turning the attention of American collectors and art loving public to the earlier classical styles.





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